THE QUERELLE OF ARMS AND LETTERS DURING THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

(volume one : text)

ERIC HAYWOOD

Thesis submitted
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
University of Edinburgh
1981

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to capture the identity of a hitherto unknown genre, to chart its development and to assess its significance. It has been called querelle to indicate that arms and letters are "quarrelling": over privileges and titles of greater nobility and utility. Arms and letters can signify the military and literary professions, the men who practise them, the tools and methods peculiar to either, the virtues necessary for or inherent in them, their aims, and the type of life they secure. The genre was particularly popular in the second half of the 16th cent., but first manifested itself at the end of the 15th. Its origins however can be traced back to the 12th cent., amongst Roman lawyers, in the querelle of Knights and Doctors, which sought to establish, from the Corpus iuris, the rights of precedence of knights (milites) and doctors of law. The genre developed as follows. 1. 12th and 13th cent. First stirrings of the querelle of Knights and Doctors in legal glosses. 2 The querelle takes shape at the hands of the Commentators. During this and the preceding stage no independent works are produced on the subject, except for a lecture given at Vercelli in 1340. 3 Early 15th cent. The querelle of Knights and Doctors has become so well known, that it inspires the works of non-lawyers, which however remain isolated phenomena at the margins of the genre. 4 Publication of Ilicino's commentary to Petrarch's Trionfi (1475), which contains the first version of the querelle of Arms and Letters. Ilicino borrowed the idea of the querelle from the Roman lawyers, but brought to the debate terms and notions from his own Aristotelian-Scholastic background, which left an indelible mark on the genre. The popularity of Ilicino's commentary made his querelle known all over Italy. 5 The popularity of Ilicino's querelle prompted Roman lawyers to "counterattack" and publish "authorized" versions of the genre: the only independent works ever contributed to the querelle of Knights and Doctors. As a literary phenomenon however it proved no match for the querelle of Arms and Letters, and it was confined once again to legal commentaries. But it did continue to be debated by lawyers until the 17th cent., and also to provide inspiration for the querelle of Arms and Letters. 6. End 15th-early 16th cent. Initial phase of the querelle of Arms and Letters: in southern Italy, and at the hands of philosopher-physicians like Ilicino. This was the liveliest phase of the querelle. 7 With the publication of a dialogue by Brucioli (1529), which is a plagiarism of an earlier work, the genre enters its most productive, but least innovative phase. It becomes a literary entertainment in the vernacular, and mostly in dialogue form. In the second half of the 16th cent. a dozen works are written on the subject, but they only differ from one another in their mode of presentation. To what extent the querelle reflects a social reality is still unclear. Disputes about precedence were taking place throughout these centuries, but it is hard to gauge their seriousness and the identity of those involved. The knights may have been no more than dubbed merchants, and the conflict therefore more a clash of professional interests than of actual classes. Behind the querelle of Arms and Letters in southern Italy, one can sense a real antagonism between a military aristocracy contemptuous of letters and men who strongly believe in the value of learning. With the passing of time (and the return of the genre to northern Italy), a reconciliation seems to take place between the contending parties, but the relations may not always have been as friendly as they were made out to be.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The research for this thesis was sparked off by Castiglione's Cortegiano. Arms and letters are the chief requirements of an ideal courtier, the two disciplines he must master "più che mediocremente", but the speakers are in some doubt as to which of the two should be his main profession. Is his first duty to serve his prince with the sword on the battlefield or with the pen in the council-chamber? Should he put more effort into impressing ladies with his valour in jousts and tournaments, or into charming them with his learned conversation in the parlour? In short, what is to be his primary raison d'être, war or peace? This is one of the very first problems with which the speakers concern themselves, and they continue to debate it, in one way or another, until the very last.

Given the importance of this problem in the fabric of the work, it is somewhat surprising that, in chapters 45 and 46 of book I, where the speakers are arguing about the relative superiority of arms and letters and their relationship to one another (are letters to be held an "ornamento dell'arme", or arms an "ornamento delle lettere"?), they should seem so keen to change the subject as quickly as possible. No sooner have they begun to discuss it than Ludovico da Canossa says: "omai si è parlato a bastanza", to which Ludovico Pio replies: "anzi troppo", and everyone agrees. But although the question will not again be broached from that angle, the problem of arms and letters and of the courtier's two professions will continue to receive much of the speakers' attention throughout the rest of the work.

One is bound to deduce from this that Castiglione considered these two chapters as slightly irrelevant to the major theme of his work, that in his mind the "disputazione lungamente agitata da omini sapientissimi", which set arms and letters against one another, was a

different matter from discussions about reconciling them, about combining military and literary values, which is what the Cortegiano is primarily about. This is an assumption which was first made many years ago by Vittorio Cian. In his edition of the Cortegiano, he detached these two chapters, as it were, from the body of the text by identifying their contents as a contribution to a specific and age-old literary topos, and by therefore implicit/ly regarding them as distinct from other discussions about arms and letters in the work. "Questa della preferenza da darsi alle armi o alle lettere - Cian wrote - è una delle tante questioni oziose (come quella sulla nobiltà, sulla preminenza dell'uomo sopra la donna ecc.) che, a partire dall'antichità, e durante il Rinascimento, furono trattate e agitate con un interesse e un ardore polemico, che noi oggi difficilmente riusciamo a spiegarci." Cian's contention has met with both approval and disapproval amongst scholars, but to this very day it has gone unverified, and chapters 45 and 46 of the first book of the Cortegiano have remained somewhat of a mystery. As recently as 1978, J.R. Woodhouse commented that "the arguments for and against qualities of military, as opposed to literary, excellence, were hotly debated during the Renaissance. Cian has a list of minor treatises where the debate flourished, as well as quotations from the Classics and from Castiglione's contemporaries, to show the importance of the topic. It is perhaps, then, extraordinary that Castiglione devotes only two brief chapters to the subject." To me, it seemed even more extraordinary that Castiglione should devote only two brief chapters to the subject, when arms and letters are so crucial to the dialectic of the Cortegiano (there is no reason, really, why he should have dwelt on it at greater length, simply because it was "hotly debated" at the time). Clearly this was a point which demanded further investigation. Did the topos Cian claimed to recognize in these two chapters really exist, I asked

myself, and did its roots really stretch back as far as antiquity? And was it really as otiose as Cian would have us believe?

As Woodhouse points out, Cian listed a series of other works of the period confronting arms and letters. This was an obvious lead to follow, and I decided to read these texts (which few other people seemed to have done), in order to find out what they had in common and whether they did constitute a distinctive and identifiable genre. I discovered that they did: that many of the arguments reappeared in work after work, and that many of the works were written in response to other works. This prompted me to search for more evidence. Some was readily at hand (listed for instance in Ruth Kelso's Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century, or contained in Eugenio Garin's La disputa delle arti nel Quattrocento), but some it took much time and effort to discover (in particular Lapo da Castiglionchio's Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia literarum, Tommaso Beccadelli's Disputatione de precedentia, the anonymous "Florentine" commentary to Petrarch's Trionfi, and Luca Prassicio's Impugnatio contra Augustinum Niphum). This extra evidence confirmed the existence of a definite genre with a recognizable identity, and since it existed, I decided that it had to be given a name. I chose to call it the "querelle" of Arms and Letters. "Querelle", I felt, would best single it out for what it was. To call it "debate" for instance, would not have been precise enough and would not have distinguished it from other pronouncements made on the subject of arms and letters during the Renaissance (like the type of discussion we find in the Cortegiano, precisely, on the educational desirability of combining military and literary qualifications). "Querelle", on the other hand, suggests that arms and letters are pitted against one another, that they are "quarrelling". And that is what the genre is about.

It pictures a clash of interests, not a reconciliation, and although the clash may sometimes be resolved in an act of reconciliation, on the whole arms are vying with letters, men-of-arms competing with men-of-letters for greater privileges and to be recognized as more noble. By describing the genre as a "querelle", my intention was also to evoke reminiscences of other genres of a similar nature and equally popular at the time, which usually go by the name of "querelle" as well: the querelle des femmes and the querelle des anciens et des modernes. Just as these sought to establish whether women were inferior, equal or superior to men, and whether the moderns were inferior, equal or superior to the ancients, so our querelle aims to find out the same thing about arms in relation to letters and letters in relation to arms.

The task I set myself was to read and interpret the texts, to discover as much as possible about them and their authors, to establish links between them, and thus to define and chart the development of the genre. I would venture, with all due respect, to compare my work to that of an archaeologist. I continued "excavations" begun, but left unfinished, by others. I tried to bring new evidence to light, so as to compare it with material unearthed many years ago, and I then attempted to explain the significance of the discoveries. But I am only too aware that my thesis is no more than a preliminary report and that much work remains to be done. From now on however the progress is likely to be much slower. The available evidence suggests that the genre was extremely popular, far more popular in fact than we are able at this stage to ascertain, but it provides few clues for further research. It is like an incomplete jig-saw puzzle: the gaps are a good sign in that they certify the existence of more evidence. But they are also a frustrating reminder of how that evidence is still missing. This does not prevent us

however from gathering a clear enough impression of how the genre developed and what it was.

Amongst the works listed by Cian and Kelso, most are about arms and letters, but a few are about knights and doctors (of law). At first the two groups seemed rather strange bedfellows, until it emerged that it was from the querelle of Knights and Doctors (as I decided to call it) that the querelle of Arms and Letters originally sprang. Roman lawyers at Bologna, from at least the early thirteenth century, had been discussing the respective rights of precedence of knights and doctors, and gathering evidence from Justinian's Corpus iuris to prove their points. The issue remained a favourite topic for debate with their successors until well into the seventeenth century, but having been set at the very beginning its terms were never really altered. It was a debate carried on by experts at universities, and each generation handed down to the next what it had inherited from its predecessors. But the very popularity of the querelle of Knights and Doctors in schools of law, together perhaps with the frequent disputes about precedence arising beyond the walls of academe, made it well known even to the non-initiate. Authors who were not lawyers or academics referred to it or quoted from it in their works, and a couple of them, in the early fifteenth century, composed entire works inspired by it: Lapo da Castiglionchio his Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia literarum and Flavio Biondo the Borsus. These two works were an original departure from what by then had become a rather stifled tradition, but they remained isolated phenomena at the margins of the genre. They did not set any new trend. A few years later however someone did set a new trend. It was the physician-philosopher Bernardo Ilicino, in the monumental commentary to Petrarch's Trionfi, which he wrote in the 1460s and was first published in 1475. Borrowing the idea of the querelle from the Roman

lawyers but using terms and methods of his own trade, and taking as a pretext Petrarch's presentation of famous warriors and philosophers of antiquity (warriors on the right-hand side of Lady Fame, philosophers on her left), Ilicino produced the first version of what was to become a new genre: the querelle of Arms and Letters. Ilicino's commentary was enormously popular: for the next half century it was re-printed on average once every two years. As a result his querelle became known all over Italy, and its influence was such, that it not only established a new genre. It also prompted the publication of independent works on the querelle of Knights and Doctors, which until then had always remained confined to glosses and commentaries of the Corpus iuris. But as a literary phenomenon knights and doctors proved no match for arms and letters, and before long the legal querelle was returned to its original abode, whilst its offspring prospered and multiplied. In its initial stage, the querelle of Arms and Letters was a learned affair. Like the querelle of Knights and Doctors, though unlike Ilicino's, it was written in Latin. It was however debated with much passion, against a vivid social background, which emerges clearly from between the lines of the texts. The background was that of the Kingdom of Naples at the turn of the fifteenth century. By the early decades of the sixteenth century however, as the genre gained in popularity, it lost the liveliness of its early phase; and by the second half of the century, when it was at its most popular, it had become set in its ways: usually in dialogue form, always in the vernacular, and mostly as a literary entertainment which was more a reflection of itself than it was of any particular social environment. Variations upon the theme were still being composed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, although by then the genre seems on the whole to have run its course.

In my first chapter, I look at the querelle

of Knights and Doctors, and in order to impress it upon the reader's mind, I begin with its most original contribution: Tommaso Beccadelli's Disputatione de precedentia of 1489 which, because of its encomiastic nature (it was written for and in praise of the Bentivoglio of Bologna), is the only work in this tradition with some literary polish to it and the only work enlivened by a kind of narrative, as well as being the only work written on the subject in Italian and in verse. I then perform a "flash-back" to trace the origins of the genre amongst the Glossators of Bologna in the twelfth century, whereupon I follow its development through the centuries, back to Tommaso Beccadelli and beyond. In chapter two I investigate what happened at the margins of the querelle of Knights and Doctors during the early decades of the fifteenth century, showing how the querelle was known beyond strictly legal circles and how it also inspired "outsiders" to write on the subject, but how at the same time it tended almost inevitably to undergo a metamorphosis once it had been released of its bonds with the corpus of Roman law. Chapter three tells of the birth of the querelle of Arms and Letters in Ilicino's commentary to Petrarch's Trionfi, and of the following Ilicino had amongst fellow physicians of his in the south of Italy. Chapter four is a survey of the genre during its vernacular and most popular, but least innovative phase. Here again I juggle with chronology. I begin with Antonio Brucioli's Dialogo della preminentia dell'armi et delle lettere, written in the 1520s, and then I jump forward one hundred years, to present Isabella Andreini's Amoroso contrasto sopra le armi e le lettere. This is to show how very little things had changed in the course of a century, how repetitive the tradition had become. In the closing section of the chapter I then fill in the gap between Brucioli and Andreini. In my final chapter I attempt to gauge the significance of the querelle, in social and cultural terms, and I make various suggestions for further research.

My subject is neither entirely literary, nor really historical. It can best be classified perhaps as a history of ideas. The notion may be somewhat out of fashion, but I believe that the present thesis will show how certain ideas, once brought into being (under the stimulus of particular social, political and cultural events), do take on a life of their own, as it were, and can continue to exist for decades and even centuries on end, regardless almost of changing historical circumstances. It would however be preposterous to claim that ideas can be totally independent of men. Like the notes of a symphony without musicians, they would be naught but for the individuals who express them. That is why I have tried to provide what information I could on the authors who wrote the texts and the circumstances under which they were written. On some authors (like Lapo da Castiglionchio and Galateo) much more information was available than on others (like, say, Beccadelli); some (like Flavio Biondo) I felt were sufficiently well known already not to require any biographical presentation. And in chapter four, which is a survey rather than a detailed analysis like the other chapters, and because of the very repetitive nature of the querelle at this stage, where it seems to have been born more of literary precedent than of personal circumstances, I did not believe it was necessary to give that much emphasis to the identity of the authors. For these reasons there may appear to be an imbalance between some parts of my text and others. This is also due to the impossibility of covering in equal and consistent detail a span of three centuries and more (my earliest text is Homodeis's Quaestio of 1340, although I attempt to go even further back in time, to the early days of the Bologna school of Roman law, and my last text is Isabella Andreini's Amoroso contrasto of 1625). It could be argued, I suppose, that I need not have encompassed such a vast period and that I could have focused more fruitfully on a smaller number of texts, but, as was pointed out to me, I suffer from that incurable disease

which is not uncommon amongst scholars, la maladie des origines. The first texts upon which my gaze fell were all of the sixteenth century, and they inevitably compelled me to enquire where it all came from and how it had all begun. But I am firmly of the opinion that these are important questions. One would be ill-advised to pass judgement on a particular literary phenomenon in any given period, without having first ascertained whether and how it was peculiar to that period, and this naturally means to investigate its prehistory. The querelle of Arms and Letters during the latter part of the sixteenth century could seem like the expression of a heated social conflict, but it loses much of its bite when many of its arguments are seen to be simple replays of arguments first expressed decades if not centuries earlier.

This study, then, covers the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I refer to these centuries as the Renaissance, but I use the expression as a value-free notion, implying neither condemnation nor approval, and not intended to distinguish one period from another in other than chronological terms. I use it simply as practical shorthand to describe roughly those centuries which in any case, and for better or for worse, have come to be known as the Renaissance. The querelle could, if one so wished, help in a redefinition of the concept of the Renaissance, but that is not the purpose of my thesis. It is the querelle itself, with its inner logic and development, which matters and is under investigation, not, or only incidentally, an historical concept.

Most of the texts which are the subject of this thesis survive today in more forms than one: either in various manuscripts, or in several printed editions, or in a combination of manuscripts and printed editions. I have attempted to collate as much of the evidence as possible, in order to gather as accurate a picture as possible and

to provide quotations which are as reliable as possible. But my aim was not to edit texts, since I was not philologically equipped to do so. The readings I offer therefore are more the result of empirical induction than of strict scientific deduction. However, in order to avoid the charge of arbitrariness, I have always listed variants and provided any other data which would allow the reader to reach his own informed opinion. I have left the spelling of the originals untouched, but so as to avoid cumbersome and unsightly quotations, I have not included a sic between square brackets every time the old spelling differs from today's (e.g. commune instead of comune). I only use a sic in cases where the original is blatantly incorrect (e.g. sine for sive). Punctuation on the other hand I have modernized, as well as the use of accents, always seeking to provide quotations which are as readable yet as accurate as could be. These remarks apply in particular to Appendix I (Ilicino's version of the querelle), which should not be judged as an edition, but simply as an aid to a better understanding of my argument. My reasons for including it, are its importance in the history of the querelle, its conciseness, which makes it a handy introduction to the genre, and the fact that the edition through which it has been made available to the modern reading public (Garin's edition in La disputa delle arti) is quite misleading, having been drastically abridged. It would be quite impossible for anyone to make sense of what I say on the basis of the text provided by Garin.

The appendix, together with the notes and the bibliography, as will have been noticed, are in a separate volume. It was felt that this would be the most practical solution, since many of the notes are too long to fit at the bottom of the page and too unwieldy to be included at the end of each chapter. I have tried to make the notes as simple as possible. I have reduced the number of abbreviations such as op.cit. and ibid. to the bare minimum, en-

suring that when they are used, there could be no difficulty in identifying what they are meant to refer to; and what they refer to is never more than one note away, unless otherwise indicated. On the whole however I have preferred to spell out the name of the author and of the work to which reference is being made, even if it meant repeating the same thing at short intervals. Complete bibliographical information for secondary material (full title, publisher, date and place of publication) has been restricted to the actual bibliography; in the notes only as much information has been provided (usually author and beginning of title) as is necessary to locate any particular work in the bibliography without difficulty. All cross-references in the notes, unless otherwise indicated, are always to other notes within the same chapter. As regards the bibliography, I should like to explain my departure from the normal typographical practice of italicizing not the title of an article but of the journal in which it is published. A bibliography should be a handy reference tool supplying details in the first place and at first sight of what a particular work is <u>about</u>; <u>where</u> it is published is ancillary information which only becomes relevant once one has decided that one is actually interested in reading that work. One can then pause to find out more about it, but there is nothing more distracting, to my mind, than flicking through a bibliography and constantly having one's attention drawn (for italicized words inevitably attract one's attention) to the names of journals of whose existence one knows already. The practice can be still more confusing, when articles and books have not been kept apart and one is driven cross-eyed from trying to figure out what is what. To avoid this happening, I have both separated articles from books in my bibliography and italicized the titles of articles. The titles of journals are given between double quotation marks. I have also included amongst the articles those articles which are not published in actual journals but in <u>Festschriften</u> or similar works, as well as individual chapters or sec-

tions of particular works, when it was those chapters or sections I wished to bring to the reader's notice. But so that there could be no problem in locating an article, I adopted the following procedure: if it is published in a journal, its italicized title is followed immediately by the name of the journal between double quotation marks. If it is published in a book, its italicized title is followed by the title of the book between double quotation marks preceded by an 'in'. In my bibliography of original works, I have adopted the same procedure, in cases where I have concerned myself not with whole works but with chapters or sections of works, of italicizing such chapters and sections, and giving the title of the complete work between double quotation marks preceded by an 'in'. Most of the original works I studied have a complicated history of manuscripts and editions, too complicated to be included in the bibliography. I have therefore listed only one edition for each work in the bibliography (usually the first edition, or else the edition I was able to get hold of), but in every instance I refer back to the pages and notes where the complete and detailed history of the work is explained. My aim was always to make my thesis as simple and manageable to read as possible.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to all who gave me their assistance and valuable advice while I was working on this thesis, in particular to my supervisor, Professor C.P. Brand, to Professors Dupront and Wilson of the European University Institute in Florence, and Professor David Nolan of University College Dublin. I am also grateful to Patricia Grogan for the typing she did; and to my wife, without whose help I would never have managed to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion, I am endebted beyond measure. The thesis is dedicated to her, and to Alexia who, aged barely a year and a half, had to learn to say "pee-aish-dee" and not to touch it.

Chapter I

THE QUERELLE OF KNIGHTS AND DOCTORS

A. Tommaso Beccadelli: Breve e bella disputatione de precedentia intra el cavaliero, doctore et conte.

"Volendo Giovanni Bentivogli che Annibale il figliuolo riuscisse nel governo della repubblica huomo pratico, egli lo fa creare confalloniere di giustitia; fu il primo dí di novembre, la domenica. Il quale hebbe per compagni gli infrascritti signori antiani, cioè: Bernardino Gozzadini cavalliere, Petronio Zagni dottore, Alessandro Buttrigari procuratore, il conte Galeazzo Pepoli, Domenico da Viggiano notaro, Giovanni Polo da Castello, Agostino Marsili et Ottaviano Fantucci. Fu in questo magistrato accompagnato Annibale dal signor Giovanni il padre, dal senato et da tutto il popolo con tanto fasto et honore quanto altri fossero stati avanti a lui."[1] The year was 1489 and Annibale only just 20, too young according to the city statutes to become Gonfaloniere di Giustizia (the minimun age was 21), but in the wake of the Malvezzi Conspiracy of the preceding year the hold of the Bentivoglio over Bologna was loosening and Giovanni II was anxious to consolidate his family's power: therefore "fa creare" Annibale, his eldest son, Standardbearer of Justice, i.e. president of the Council of Elders (Anziani), which was the executive organ of government.[2] As was the custom, Annibale held office for two months, until the last day of the year. On the eve of his "retirement" a book recounting an episode which had occurred under his gonfalonierato and in which he and his fellow Anziani had been involved, was published in Bologna by Platone de Benedictis with a dedication to Annibale: "ad Illustrem et Excellentem Dominum, Dominum Hannibalem Bentivolum, Vicecomitem de Aragonia, Dignissimum Bononiensis Iustitiae praesidem". The book was entitled Breve e bella disputatione de precedentia intra el cavaliero, doctore et conte and was the work of one little-known Tommaso Beccadelli, a poet and notary who, it has been claimed, was also Chancellor of the comune of Bologna, but on whose life the only indication we seem to have is that in 1475 he acted as a kind of master of ceremonies

during two after-dinner performances given in Bologna on the occasion of the wedding of Count Guido Pepoli to a young countess from Modena.[3] He was no doubt of the same family as the famous Antonio Beccadelli Panormita, but this does not tell us much about him.

The Disputatione is a short ("breve") poem of 529 verses written in terza rima. It is not of the greatest literary value, and Beccadelli himself apologises for not having succeeded in making it as bella as he would have liked: "da la mia exigua rhyma/ - he says - non aspectar facundia Mantuana:/ li nostri versi son de pocha estima" (vv.91-3). But what Beccadelli was writing in any case was not so much a work of art as a work of propaganda. More than a quarter of the poem (134 of the 529 lines) is given over to superlative praises of the Bentivoglio and venomous attacks on their enemies, in the following vein:

> O ben consulto! O grandissimo scorno
> de synagoghe e rabiose mente,
> che glie facean cotal desegni intorno.
> O ben consulto a chi ha lo cor fervente
> al stato Bentivoglio, a chi se trova
> de la felice Sega bon servente
> Questa fia degna e memorabil nova.
> El se può dir, ch'al tempo de Hannibale
> el seclo de Saturno se rinova.
> El se può dir, che de profunda valle
> ogn'homo sia venuto a chiara luce,
> e drito a un bono e virtuoso calle (vv.73-84).[4]

The poem being so blatantly encomiastic and partisan, it is perhaps not surprising that it should only have had, as far as we can tell, a limited edition and scant circulation. Only two copies of it are now extant, one in Bologna and one in Modena, in the library of Annibale's family-in-law, the Biblioteca Estense.[5] But although its publication may have passed largely unnoticed, it was by no means a freak phenomenon. The subject it recounted belonged to a well and long-established tradition: the querelle of Knights and Doctors.

The story of the Disputatione is briefly as follows. Annibale and his eight fellow Anziani are sitting down to a meal together. Of the Anziani we must remember the names of three in particular: Count Galeazzo Pepoli, "ferma colona del gran Pepol seme, /de litterati refugio e solazo,/.../ coniuncto del Falcone excelso e magno" (vv. 116-19);[6] Petronio Zagni, "doctor famoso e maximo legista" (v. 122), and Bernardino Gozzadini, "cavalier acorto" (v. 125). Pepoli and Gozzadini are sitting on either side of the Gonfaloniere and Petronio Zagni, feeling wronged, gets up to complain that the place which by right should have gone to him is being usurped by Gozzadini. Incensed, Gozzadini jumps to his feet and accuses Zagni, who should know better, of having taken leave of his senses; and, authorities in hand, he argues that the knight must have precedence over the doctor. Zagni is unimpressed and, taking up the challenge, he retorts with more authorities still that it is the doctor who must have precedence over the knight. But, he concludes, "precedete, poi che non vel veda / la prava abusion de questa Terra" (vv. 382-3).[7] This only serves to outrage Gozzadini even more, who refuses to accept the lawyer's conclusions and threatens to appeal to the Pope in Rome (the Pope, it must be remembered, was the nominal overlord of Bologna, which was part of the States of the Church). For the time being however they patch up their differences and the episode ends happily. The meal is over and "cum la Corona Bentivoglia, / Hannibale, i Signuri se n'andorno / in camera de bona e lieta voglia" (vv. 400-2). The poem itself though does not end there, for the story is set within a kind of cornice. At the beginning two fellow-citizens from Bologna, Volsco and Demetrio, meet in Rome. Volsco asks Demetrio whether he has any interesting news from home, and Demetrio answers that he has just heard of an appeal which is being made by certain bolognesi to the Papal Court:

Volsco: Che c'è di novo?

Demetrio: El c'è una appellasone
che fano certi Bolognesi in Corte,
a cui de Pietro tene el Confalone (vv. 7-9).[8]

Volsco wants to know more, so Demetrio tells him the details of the story (as we have just seen it), which he interweaves with those exuberant praises of the Bentivoglio. Having explained the case, Demetrio then asks Volsco for his opinion on the matter. Volsco at first disclaims any qualification to speak about it, but in the end he gives his support to the knight, especially - he adds - as the knight in question is Bernardino Gozzadini:

el Gozadin è molto più perfecto
che l'altri cavalier e de più orgulio.
Intendo che, fra mille, el fu già electo
in Milite dal Duca de Ferrara
pel più prestante, generoso e accepto.
Questa fu cosa pretiosa e rara
e facta a la presentia de baruni
de li più degni, ch'abia Italia chiara.
Questo fu al tempo de l'excesi duni,
de le felice noze del Falcone,
facti da tuti e principi ciascuni (vv.428-38).[9]

If a count however should also happen to be present, Volsco says, he must have precedence not only over the doctor but also over the knight, and all the more so if he happens to be called Galeazzo Pepoli:

el Conte Galeazo, nobilissimo
de sangue e de fameglia. Che glie sia?
Che dice' tu de lui? no è'l dignissimo
sopra el doctor e l'equite predicto?
No è'l de più excellentia e più amplissimo?
(vv. 446-50).

He proves the superiority of the count with legal references once again, before returning to the knight and doctor and concluding the poem with a compromise solution which gives precedence to doctors "in doctoreis" (v. 521), that is in circumstances and situations connected more specifically with their own profession, and to knights

"in gli loro" (v.522), i.e. in circumstances and situations connected with their profession.

Petronio Zagni too had hinted at this solution towards the end of his harangue (vv.325-7), but the solution which he finally proposed was a compromise of a different sort, which is weighted in favour of doctors. According to Zagni, the first place is to go to the doctor who is a member of the prince's entourage - "qui a latere principis no è disciolto" (v.342) -, the second to the knight who is in the same position - "el milite che media / el principe col so sinistro lato" (vv.343-4) - , the third to the famous doctor who does not belong to the prince's entourage - "el doctor celebrato / qui non sit ad latus nec in corona / del principe descripto e nominato "(vv.346-8) -, the fourth to the simple knight - "el simplex miles" (v.349) -, and the last to the doctorelli (v.350), with the proviso that any of the latter, any iusconsulto (v.353) who also happens to be knighted - "ornato de quel auro" (v.353), a reference to the golden spurs which were part of the insignia of a duly dubbed knight - must precede the simple knights - militelli (v.352). Gozzadini for his part had made no such distinctions. To him all knights, whatever their description, are superior to any doctor, whatever his position. Their superiority is unquestionable: they have earned it through long and devoted service to mankind. It is thanks to them that the fatherland and its citizens are protected from external and internal enemies, thanks to them that morality is preserved. They, in short, are the purveyors and guardians of civilization. Long live therefore the golden spurs!

Excelso Confalone e vui Signuri,
io credo che potiate haver inteso,
che la militia è prova in casi duri.
La dignità equestre è un grave peso,
de summa auctoritade e d'exercitio,
a le fatiche grande sempre acceso.

Per quel s'acquista gloria e beneficio
d'imperio e de potente signoria,
de populi e de terre el gran servitio.
Per quel se guarda da la gente ria
la nostra Patria; i nostri citadini
godeno in pace cum la mente pia.
Per quel son descaciati l'assassini;
per quel, col nostro valoroso capo,
semo secur da soi pensier ferini.
Per quel fia expulso Saturnin e Gracho;
per quel destructi li seditiosi
fautur de giochi de Lenoni e Bacho.
Per quel vivemo netti da leprosi,
per quel usciti e mundi da letame,
per quel exempti da contagiosi.
Per quel portiamo le Palladie rame
in luocho de baliste e de ronchoni;
per quel frenate le sceleste brame.
Vivano adoncha l'aurati speroni (vv. 190-214).[10]

As evidence of the knights eminence Gozzadini adduces their immunity from laws and statutes, in particular laws regarding inheritance (knights may bequeath their belongings as they please, without regard for normal testamentary procedure), and the fact that all great lords, all princes and emperors are wont to create themselves knights. To this Zagni retorts that it is their ignorance and lack of understanding of the law which entitle knights to such exemptions. Yet he does not altogether dismiss Gozzadini's arguments. He would agree that certain knights do have rightful claims to precedence, but in order to have them recognized, these knights must satisfy one important condition, and few contemporary knights any longer do so: they must bear arms and they must have fought to defend their fatherland and fellow-citizens. It is not sufficient simply to have been girt with a sword and to be wearing a torque (the other insignia, together with the golden spurs, of ceremonial knighthood). Torquatus, says Zagni, may well have adorned his neck with a torque. But he deserved it, for it was a spoil of war, taken from a Gaul he himself had defeated in battle.[11] Today however any old Dick, Tom or Harry demands precedence because he happens to be wearing a worthless necklace:

ma l'hodierna usanza è un grande fallo:
el se prepone per un vil cerchiello
(io dico el vero) Piero e Polo in ballo (vv.304-6).

A necklace no more makes a knight than a hood makes a doctor:

un milite non fia per sol colana,
sí como pel capuzo un doctorello (vv.308-9).

So it is only the real knight in the lawyer's opinion, who may have any justifiable claim to precedence. To this real knight however the real doctor is not only equal but superior; and the real doctor is he who "professa in scrana"(v.310) , the judge or teacher of law.[12] In some cases therefore some knights may be superior to some doctors, but on the whole most comtemporary doctors are superior to contempory knights, and in all events the best of doctors is preferable to the best of knights.

To bolster their arguments both Gozzadini and Petronio Zagni quote many legal authorities, but whereas Zagni (he is of course the expert) gives references to specific glosses or commentaries, Gozzadini limits himself to dropping illustrious names: Julian, Ulpian, Paul, Pampinian;[13] Justinian, the "founding father" of Roman law; and a host of Glossators and Commentators.[14] The only exception which Gozzadini makes is a very specific but mysterious reference to Gratian.[15] Zagni on the other hand gives his sources in great detail. He says that there are not as many sheep in the Marches as there are authors, texts, commentaries and glosses which give precedence to doctors; but he only names six of them, and what is more he does a bit of cheating, for he mentions the same person twice, once by his surname and once by his Christian name, as though he were two different people. He quotes the commentary of Baldus to the proem of the Digest (vv.314-20), Angelo Aretino's commentary to the first law "De testamento militis"(vv.322-4), Alessandro

Tartagni in his commentary to the law "De vulgari e pupillar" (vv.325-7); and his pecking order he claims to derive from Giovanni da Imola's commentary to the "Lex centurio" (vv.338-54).[16] The person he names twice is of particular interest to us, for he is the author of a text to which we shall shortly be directing our attention. (see below chap. 1, section C). He is the fourteenth century Milanese lawyer Signorelo de Homodeis: "Signorello" (v.329) and "l'Hamodeo" (v.359). Alessandro Tartagni - "el gran Tartagna" (v.520) - was a famous fifteenth century jurist from Imola (1423-4? - 1477), who taught law at various universities in northern Italy and in particular at Bologna from 1461 to 1467, where he may well have been Beccadelli's teacher, if indeed Becadelli did study Law (which is a probability given his apparent familiarity with legal texts) and if he studied it at Bologna. Angelo Aretino, another famous fifteenth century jurist who taught in many northern Italian universities and occupied important positions in the administration of several northern and central Italian cities, had been Tartagni's teacher. Giovanni da Imola (d.1436) taught Angelo Aretino and was the pupil of the famous Baldus (1327?-1400), who in turn was the colleague and former pupil of the no less famous Bartolus (1314?-1357), Roman lawyers both of international fame.[17]

Beccadelli thus takes us back to the very hey-day of the Bologna Commentators, and through them to the period of the Glossators (i.e. to the time when Roman law was re-born in the West), and beyond that, via the corpus of Roman law, to the late Roman Empire, when Pampinian, Julian, Ulpian and Paul lived and were active. He even goes as far back as the late Rebublic, with a quotation from Cicero. But Cicero, who will have an important part to play in the context of the Arms and Letters querelle, in the Disputatione has but a minimal, not to say negative function. His opinion is adduced by Volsco to prove the superiority of knights, but because Volsco in fact misquotes him (unless the error is a

typographical one), what he ends up by scoring is not a point against the adversary but an own-goal. The quotation in from Pro Milone (10) and should correctly read: "silent leges inter arma." But in the mouth of Volsco it becomes:

> ch'el doctor preceda, quella è una zanza,
> Arma inter leges silent, disse Tullio.
> Questa è la propria e vera bassadanza (vv.424-6).[18]

With his legal authorities Becadelli is luckily more at ease. It is on them (going back in time a few centuries) that we must now focus our attention, for it is they, the Glossators and Commentators of Justinian's Corpus iuris, who are the true originators of the querelle.[19]

B. The Glossators and Commentators.

Although feudalism during the Middle Ages did not develop into as fully-fledged a system in Italy - in northern Italy at least - as it did in other parts of Europe, knighthood was nevertheless a social reality there of some importance and knights a social group enjoying considerable privileges, such for instance as immunity from forced labour or exemption from certain taxes.[20] This was no secret to the early Roman lawyers of Bologna, in the twelfth century, who were also aware of the fact that, according to Roman law, the milites were a class with just as many privileges, if not more. It was not long therefore before they took to identifying the knights their contempories with the milites of Roman times.This identification is still noticeable in Beccadelli's Disputatione, where cavalier and milite are synonymous (see above p.20). The early Roman lawyers came to realize furthermore that those whom the Corpus iuris recognised as milites were not simply those who served the state in war but those too who served it in peace, and in particular lawyers (causidici or advocati);[21] and in the course of time they evolved the notion and terminology of a twofold militia, the armata militia and the inermis militia. Azone for instance, one of the later Glossators, makes the following remarks in his Summa institutionum:

imperator assignat duo tempora, unum bellorum et alterum pacis. In tempore bellorum necessaria sunt ad summam reipublicae tuitionem ista quatuor: arma, usus armorum, victoria, triumphus. In tempore vero pacis necessaria sunt quatuor similia: leges scilicet, usus legum, calumniae pulsio, iuris religio. Ista ergo duo, arma et leges, pariter debent esse in principe, et alterum semper eguit alterius auxilio, et tam militaris res legibus est in tuto collocata, quam ipsae leges armorum praesidio servatae sunt. ... et tanta gaudent similitudine pariter et splendent utilitate, ut nomen armorum et nomina eorum, qui exercentur in armis, accommodentur legibus et legistis. Leges ergo dicuntur arma, et Imperator legibus dicitur armari,... et milites dicuntur advocati...Est ergo militia alia armata, alia inermis vel literata. 22

Arms and laws are the two weapons of the emperor, the two pillars of the state, each needing the support of the other. Already in the Corpus iuris do we find the expression of such ideas, and in particular through the very words of Justinian at the beginning of the Institutes and the Code, where he justifies his codification of the law and explains the importance of laws to the emperor and the (Roman) state. These passages are constantly referred to, not only in the Knight and Doctor querelle,but also in the querelle of Arms and Letters, and therefore they deserve to be quoted in full. The proem to the Institutes reads as follows:

imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis decoratam, sed etiam legibus oportet esse armatam, ut utrumque tempus et bellorum et pacis recte possit gubernari et princeps Romanus victor existat non solum in hostilibus proeliis, sed etiam per legitimos tramites calumniantium iniquitates expellens, et fiat tam iuris religiosissimus quam victis hostibus triumphator. Quorum utramque viam cum summis vigiliis et summa providentia adnuente deo perfecimus. et bellicos quidem sudores nostros barbaricae gentes sub iuga nostra deductae cognoscunt et tam Africa quam aliae innumerosae provinciae post tanta temporum spatia nostris victoriis a caelesti numine praestitis iterum dicioni Romanae nostroque additae imperio protestantur. omnes vero populi legibus iam a nobis vel promulgatis vel compositis reguntur. Et cum sacratissimas constitutiones antea confusas in luculentam ereximus consonantiam, tunc nostram extendimus curam et ad immensa prudentiae veteris volumina, et opus desperatum quasi per medium profundum euntes caelesti favore iam adimplevimus ... Summa itaque ope et alacri studio has leges nostras accipite et vosmet ipsos sic eruditos ostendite, ut spes vos pulcherrima foveat toto legitimo opere perfecto posse etiam nostram rem publicam in partibus eius vobis credendis gubernare. 23

And the introduction to the Code begins as follows:

summa rei publicae tuitio de stirpe duarum rerum, armorum atque legum veniens vimque suam exinde muniens felix Romanorum genus omnibus anteponi nationibus omnibusque dominari tam praeteritis effecit temporibus quam deo propitio in aeternum efficiet. istorum etenim alterum alterius auxilio semper viguit, et tam militaris res legibus in tuto collocata est, quam ipsae leges armorum praesidio servatae sunt. merito igitur ad prima communium rerum sustentationis semina nostram mentem nostrosque labores referentes militaria quidem agmina multiplicibus et omnem providentiam continentibus modis correximus, tam veteribus ad meliorem statum brevi tempore reductis, quam novis non solum exquisitis, sed etiam recta dispositione

nostri numinis sine novis expensis publicis constitutis, legum vero praesidia primo servando positas, deinde novas ponendo firmissima subiectis effecimus. 24

If, as these two passages suggest, arms and laws are of equal importance to the state; if therefore the armata militia and the inermis militia are of equal standing - so the Bologna lawyers argued -, it must follow that all milites, whether armati or inermes, enjoy the same privileges. Already the Glossators were debating this question and finding mostly in favour of inermes milites. The Post-glossators were even more insistent that the armata and the inermis militia be considered equal in terms of priviliges (moving ever further, according to Fitting, from the spirit and the letter of the corpus of Roman law), and by the middle of the fifteenth century it was accepted beyond doubt that all privileges granted to the armata militia must also be granted to the inermis militia, with the exception of those privileges however which derived from a knight's ignorance of the law. The advocatus and the miles were therefore equal, and just as the Roman miles was identified with the contemporary knight, so the Roman advocatus was equated with the contemporary lawyer. But not all lawyers, so the Commentators held, were equal. Some, as George Orwell was to say, were more equal than others, and these were the doctors, the doctores legum. Originally the title "Doctor" would appear to have been used simply to describe a teacher of law, but in due course it ceased to be a mere job-description and became instead an honorific distinction acquired by special conferment.[25] This is where the querelle begins: if the advocatus and the miles are equal, but the doctor is superior to the simple advocatus, it follows that the doctor must also be superior to the miles. The superiority of the doctor was then further enhanced by the recognition (deduced from arguments which we shall shortly be examining) that mere knighthood was not a dignity (dignitas) whereas doctorhood was, and that a doctor was therefore noble where a mere knight was not. Thus the balance between arms and laws established by Justinian in the two passages quoted

above could now be broken in favour of laws (it was lawyers after all who were conducting the debate). Laws though came to be regarded as superior to arms not so much because they were deemed to be more useful to the state (this is not the lawyers' main concern in the querelle although it is an argument one often comes across), but because, being a branch of learning, they ennoble man. Already Cino da Pistoia (1270-1336), the famous lawyer, poet and friend of Dante's, while discussing the point, had remarked:

nota, quod meritum scientiae nobilitat hominem. Ad hoc facit, quod Ulpianus iurisconsultus vocatur nobilis non propter genus, sed propter abundantiam meriti scientiae ... Unde qui meruit sua virtute nobilitatem habere, magis dicitur nobilis, quam ille, qui descendit ex nobili genere, quia ex genere non est aliquis nobilis, nisi praesumptive, et plus commendari potest quis in eo, quod a se quaerit, quam in eo, quod ex parentibus habuit. Et Cato dixit: scientia nobilitat animum. 26

It was Bartolus more than anyone else who, with the weight of his authority, gave lasting credibility to the belief that the doctor was noble whereas the knight was not and that as a result the doctor deserved precedence over the knight. The terms of the querelle were thus set. Subsequent generations of lawyers simply produced variations on the theme or adduced more examples to prove the point. Any qualms they may have had about denying rights of precedence to the knights their contemporaries they allayed with the argument (which we find also in Beccadelli) that these knights were not real knights. Accursius (1182?-1260), the compiler of the glossa ordinaria (the gloss to end all glosses) and the jurist recognized to be the last of the Glossators, had set out six requisites for a knight legally to be recognised as such. These conditions were then accepted as law by his successors:

et nota quod sex sunt necessaria, ut quis sit miles:

1. Primo ut miles non sit negotiator ...
2. Item quod examinetur ...
3. Item quod praestat sacramentum per genium principis et deum omnipotentem, quod mortem reipublicae causa non evitabit ...
4. Item quod ei ensis cingatur ...

5. Item stigma, id est nota publica, debet eius brachiis inscribi vel imponi ...

6. Item in numero aliorum debet poni et scribi ...

Et isti tales habent privilegia, quae dicunt leges concedi militibus. 27

Apart from the ritual character of knighthood, the important condition here (and which will be more fully developed later on) is that the knight must be precisely that and nothing else. He must bear arms and be ready to use them in the service of the commonweal, and bearing arms must be his sole vocation. The mere insignia and title of knighthood bestowed upon an individual are not sufficient in themselves to make of that individual a real knight. To reiterate the words of Beccadelli: "un milite non fia per sol colana."

C. Signorelus de Homodeis: Quaestio utrum doctor in signum honoris et praecellentiae debeat praecedere militem vel econverso.

The arguments worked out by Roman lawyers in favour of doctors and against knights, from at least the twelfth century onwards, were usually confined to glosses or commentaries of particular laws or points of law in the Corpus iuris. It was not, as far as we can tell at this stage, before the end of the fifteenth century (with one important exception) that any lawyer thought of actually gathering these arguments into a single and independent work on the subject. The exception is that of Signorelus de Homodeis, the person whom Beccadelli mentions twice in his Disputatione (see above p.24), and whom he mentions too with great respect, calling him first "quel monarcha / e de le lege pretioso vaso" (vv.329-30), and then referring to his work on the subject as "li preclari deti / ...ne l'alta soa disputa" (vv.358-9).

This work is in actual fact a lecture which Homodeis, a famous fourteenth century Milanese jurist who taught civil law in many cities of northern Italy (including Bologna, Padua, Parma and Turin) and who was later knighted and created Count Palatine, a "iusconsulto" therefore "ornato de quel auro" in Beccadelli's words (see above p.21), delivered in Vercelli in 1340.[28] The lecture was then committed to paper, though whether by Homodeis himself or a student of his or somebody else it is impossible to tell. We have very little information about it and there is only one extant manuscript of it, which is probably contemporary with the date of the lecture, but is certainly not an autograph and has clearly been copied from another manuscript.[29] For a century and a half the lecture lay mostly forgotten (hardly anyone ever quotes from it), until it was brought to light again and edited by the eminent jurist Ludovico Bolognini (1446-1508), who had it published at the beginning of the very year in which Beccadelli published his Disputatione (1489),

and in the very same city (Bologna), where Bolognini was at the time professor of law. The title of Homodeis's lecture is, Quaestio disputata per me Signorelum de Homodeis legum doctorem de Mediolano, MCCCXL de mense Maij, tunc temporis Vercellis in lectura ordinaria eminentis, 'quae' talis est: utrum doctor in signum honoris et 'praecellentiae' debeat praecedere militem, vel econverso.[30] A quaestio was a particular genre which came to be used by lawyers "for purposes of instruction". It was not bound to the legal text as glosses or commentaries had been, and it was therefore "a favoured mode of enquiry because the topic could be dealt with in some considerable depth."[31] In this move away from the actual text we can detect the culmination of the trend already initiated by the earliest Glossators of commenting on the Roman law not so much in order to elucidate it, but so as to make use of it and to apply it to contemporary problems. In so doing they often perverted its meaning or found meanings in it which were totally alien to the original letter and spirit of the text. This tendency is very noticeable in Homodeis. For each point he makes, he adduces many titles or laws from the Corpus iuris, but frequently the link between his argument and the passage he happens to be quoting is very tenuous indeed, not to say non-existent. For instance his first argument in favour of the miles is "quod altero est antiquius debet alteri praeferri" and that at the time of the Roman kings, when milites already existed, no laws had yet been promulgated and there were no legum doctores. Milites are therefore of older stock than doctores, which entitles them to precedence (p.167r°).[32] This entitlement of the oldest to precedence is proven with reference to three laws. The first is the law "De rerum divisione" (Institutes II,i):

Singulorum autem hominum multis modis res fiunt: quarundam enim rerum dominium nanciscimur iure naturali, quod, sicut diximus, appellatur ius gentium, quarundam iure civili. commodius est itaque a vetustiore iure incipere. palam est autem vetustius esse naturale ius, quod cum ipso genere humano rerum natura prodidit: civilia enim iura tunc coeperunt esse, cum et civitates condi et magistratus creari et leges scribi coeperunt; 33

the second law is "De iure immunitatis" (Digest L, 6):

CALLISTRATUS libro primo de cognitionibus. Semper in civitate nostra senectus venerabilis fuit: namque maiores nostri paene eundem honorem senibus, quem magistratibus tribuebant. circa munera quoque municipalia subeunda idem honor senectuti tributus est; 34

and the third law is "De fide instrumentorum et amissione eorum" (Digest XXII,4):

ULPIANUS libro quinquagesimo ad edictum. Si de tabulis testamenti deponendis agatur et dubitetur, cui eas deponi oportet, semper seniorem iuniori et amplioris honoris inferiori et marem feminae et ingenuum libertino praeferemus. 35

Whereas by a stretch of the imagination the first example can be construed to have some kind of connection with the subject of Homodeis's lecture, it becomes more difficult to do so with the second example, and no stretch of the imagination would be able to perform the same trick upon the third example, in which the real purport of the text matters little so long as its wording can usefully be adapted to the argument of the lecture.

There are many such instances in Homodeis's Quaestio; and this is an indication of how the Knight and Doctor querelle had by then reached a certain state of autonomy and no longer just existed in the shadow so to speak of the Corpus iuris. It did not of course cease to do so altogether (see for instance Angelo Aretino or Alessandro Tartagni), and Homodeis's lecture is still admittedly an isolated phenomenon at this early stage (and with regard to the present state of our knowledge). Commentaries about the precedence of knights and doctors continue to be written until well into the sixteenth century, long after arms and letters have all but outstripped knights and doctors in the context of the genre. They never totally give way therefore to quaestiones or similar works. However there can be no doubt that Homodeis's lecture does mark a definite step forward in the crystallization of the querelle as an autonomous genre.

The lecture is a straightforward compilation,

in two parts, of twenty-three arguments in favour of the doctor's precedence in the first part, and nineteen arguments in the second part in favour of the knight's precedence. The style is tediously repetitive. The mode of argument is the syllogism: first a general axiom, followed by the major premise, the minor premise and then the conclusion. This for example is how the first argument in favour of doctors is constructed:

(i) axiom: "et primo probatur sic: versatus circa meliora est praeponendus ante omnia. Ex quo arguitur sic"

(ii) major premise: "unusquisque dicitur melior et nobilior, qui praeest melioribus et nobilioribus ..."

(iii) minor premise: "sed ita est, quod doctor versatur circa nobiliora et meliora, videlicet circa legem; et omnis lex est inventio et omnium rerum princeps"

(iv) conclusion: "ergo versatus circa leges debet esse omnium princeps per argumenta supra facta." (p.165r°).

Every subsequent argument is introduced by the words: "praeterea hoc probatur sic", and constructed in exactly the same way. All arguments are bolstered with exclusive reference to the Corpus iuris or the glossa ordinaria (the gloss of Accursius); no authorities are named by name (as they are in Beccadelli for instance) and there is not a single non-legal quotation. After the last argument in favour of the doctor, the first part simply ends as follows: "ex quibus omnibus pro hac parte videtur concludendum quod doctor debet precedere militem. Et haec suffitiant quo ad hanc partem" (p.167r°). The section on the knight begins and ends just as casually. It begins: "in oppositum videtur quod miles debet precedere doctorem et hoc sic probant infrascripte parte rationes" (p.167r°), and it ends: "et hec suffitiant quo ad hanc partem" (p.168r°). There are five arguments less for the knight than there are for the doctor, but unless one wishes to pass what can only be a subjective judgement on the convincingness of each argument or of the sum of all the

arguments on each side, one cannot legitimately say that Homodeis obviously favours one part rather than another, that because he gives more proofs of the doctor's superiority, he did indeed believe the doctor to be superior. As we shall in fact be seeing, Homodeis's fifteenth century editor, Bolognini, draws quite the opposite conclusion as to Homodeis's preference, simply because the lecture ends with the demonstration of the superiority of the knight.

There is a certain amount of parallelism between the arguments used on either side and many a pro-doctor argument turns out to have its counter-argument in the pro-knight section; "turns out", because the lecture is not organized systematically and the reader has to fit the pieces together as in a jig-saw puzzle. Some arguments, the most exalted, are about the respective benefit (to mankind) and scope of the legal and military professions. "Lex disponit omnes res divinas et humanas" it is claimed (p.165r°) with reference to the following passage of the Code: "nihil tam studiosum in omnibus rebus invenitur quam legum auctoritas, quae et divinas et humanas res bene disponit et omnem iniquitatem expellit;"[36] and milites are therefore inferior, for they can only implement the decisions of the lawyers. The counter-argument to this is that it is thanks to arms that laws are effective, and moreover, he who gives effect to what has been prescribed (i.e. who achieves the desired end) being superior to the person who merely prescribes, the miles is more noble than the doctor, for it is he who sees to it that laws are implemented. From which it can be further argued that the miles thus deals in two perfections ("bona"), arms and laws, and has therefore even more claims to superiority over the doctor, who only deals in one perfection, namely laws.[37] But it had also been argued that the doctor benefits ("bonum operatur") both himself and others, whereas the miles only benefits himself.[38] In a similar vein we have

the argument concerning the end, the raison d'être , of doctors and milites. Doctors exist to preserve states ("finis doctorum est quod provinciae conserventur"), milites only to defend states ("finis militiae est quod provinciae vindicentur");[39] and the former is the more noble pursuit. On the other hand it is claimed that he who has a profession which is more common and more universal is superior to him who has not. The miles can practise his profession all over the world, whereas the doctor can only practise his in royal cities. The miles therefore is of more universal public utility.[40] Then we have what is certainly the oddest, not to say most perverse argument of the whole Quaestio. It sounds like a defence of doctors but is meant to favour the milites. Doctors illuminate the world ("propter doctorem mundus illuminatur"), but illumination is not necessary ("sed vivere possumus aedibus obscuratis et sic mundo obscurato"), therefore we can do without doctors, whereas we cannot do without milites.[41] In defence of doctors it is also argued that professors of law are exposed to greater dangers than are milites and that it is harder ("laboriosius") to deal in laws than it is to deal in arms.[42] This is proven with reference to the last paragraph of the proem to the Institutes quoted above (see p.27) and the passage from the Code (inc. "nihil tam studiosum") quoted at the beginning of this paragraph. A very similar argument is to be found in the section on the knight: milites deserve greater rewards, it is said, for they have to endure greater labours, as indeed their very appellation bears witness. In the law "De testamento militis" of the Digest it says:

miles autem appellatur vel a militia, id est duritia, quam pro nobis sustinent, aut a multitudine, aut a malo, quod arcere milites solent, aut a numero mille hominum, ductum a Graeco verbo, tractum a tagmate: nam Graeci mille hominum multitudinem τάγμα appellant, quasi millensimum quemque dictum: unde ipsum ducem χιλίαρχον appellant. exercitus autem nomen ab exercitatione traxit. 43

This is an argument we had already encountered in Beccadelli. Another argument we have already encountered and which we also find in Homodeis is that knowledge ("scientia") makes

man noble ("facit hominem nobilissimum")[44] - a point tenuously deduced from an irrelevant law of the Code (which says: "providendum est, ne hi, quos in foro aut meritum nobilissimos fecerit aut vetustas, in una parte consistant, aliam a rudibus atque tironibus necesse sit sustineri")[45] - therefore doctors are noble, and all the more so for being philosophers too ("doctor est philosophus cum scientia nostra appelletur philosophia"),[46] and better still for being priests, as the Digest says:

ULPIANUS libro primo institutionum. Iuri operam daturum prius nosse oportet, unde nomen iuris descendat. est autem a iustitia appellatum: nam, ut eleganter Celsus definit, ius est ars boni et aequi. Cuius merito quis nos sacerdotes appellet: iustitia namque colimus et boni et aequi notitiam profitemur, aequum ab iniquo separantes, licitum ab illicito discernentes, bonos non solum metu poenarum, verum etiam praemiorum quoque exhortatione efficere cupientes, veram nisi fallor philosophiam, non simulatam affectantes. [47]

To this the knight may retort that doctors are nothing of the sort but mere scribes ("scriptores"), and that such an undignified description can only apply to an undignified profession.[48] Milites on the other hand are paragons of (moral) virtues - fortitude, justice and fidelity. They are commended in the Code for their fortitude (and fidelity) and there can be no fortitude without justice. All this derives from a mere three words in the Code: "fortissimi ac devotissimi milites".[49] Of course Homodeis's lecture also contains the argument that the miles and the advocatus being peers and the doctor superior to the advocatus, the doctor must also be superior to the miles. To counter-balance this Homodeis says that doctors who belong to the prince's council are entitled to more immunities than simple doctors, that anyone who is absent from home for the sake of the commonweal is considered to be equal to those doctors who belong to the prince's council, that milites are in all circumstances deemed to be absent for the sake of the commonweal and that therefore all milites are superior to most doctors.[50] That the title of doctor is an honour, that it signifies dignity, whereas the mere title of miles does not, Homodeis proves on the

basis of a law which is frequently quoted in the querelle and which decrees that any professors who have taught in Constantinople for twenty years are by that mere fact entitled to ennoblement:

grammaticos tam Graecos quam Latinos, sophistas et iuris peritos in hac regia urbe professionem suam exercentes et inter statutos connumeratos, si laudabilem in se probis moribus vitam esse monstraverint, si docendi peritiam facundiamque dicendi interpretandique subtilitatem copiam disserendi se habere patefecerint, et coetu amplissimo iudicante digni fuerint aestimati, cum ad viginti annos observatione iugi ac sedulo docendi labore pervenerint, placuit honorari et his qui sunt ex vicaria dignitate connumerari. 51

In the glossa ordinaria, to the words "ex vicaria", it is explained that the vicarius is the equivalent in modern terms of "comes et dux" and therefore the doctor is both count and duke. As to the specification that the law only applies to Constantinople ("in hac regia urbe"), Fitting explains that the Glossators and Commentators usually got around this by discovering royal origins for the cities to which they wanted the law to apply, Bologna in particular.[52] The counter-argument here is that a miles is automatically entitled to be called dux, whereas doctors have to wait twenty years before claiming their entitlement.[53] Respective rights of precedence are also deduced from the type of person which either profession will not admit into its ranks. An adolescent ("impubes") can become a miles but he cannot become a doctor, therefore doctorhood is of greater standing than knighthood. And men of menial origins ("viliores homines"), such as "villains" ("coloni"), may not join the militia armata but they may join the militia inermis et legalis, therefore knighthood is superior to doctorhood.[54] Finally, and to show how inconclusive the Quaestio is and how bemusing its casuistry to the layman (the twentieth century layman at least), the respective rights of precedence of the knight and doctor are deduced with reference to the same passage of the Corpus iuris but from diametrically opposed philosophical premises. The passage from the Corpus is the introduction to the Code quoted above (see p.27); it

implies that the Emperor (Justinian), in his self-appointed task of restoring the Empire, needed arms first and laws only later. The last place being of greater dignity than the first, says the doctor, the doctor is more noble than the miles and therefore deserves precedence. The first place being of greater dignity than the last, says the knight, the miles is more noble than the doctor, and it is he therefore who deserves precedence.[55]

This point appropriately brings us down to earth again, down to the real level of the Quaestio. It is a reminder that, despite all the lofty ideas, not to say ideals which are put forward on either side, Homodeis's lecture is basically about precedence, about who is entitled to walk before whom: "quaestio est utrum doctor in signum honoris et praecellentiae debeat praecedere militem vel econverso", as the title says. Naturally the resolution of this problem does depend on having established the legitimate nobility of either the doctor or the knight, but this is a dimension of the debate, the social and cultural implications of which at this stage in time remain mostly unexplored. Homodeis's lecture is no more, it would seem, than an objective presentation to his students (or at least a presentation which intends to be objective) of the legal arguments for and against a certain case of litigation which is still sub iudice. It is also similar to what nowadays we might call a consultant's report - and indeed consultant's reports were not a foreign notion to medieval jurists.[56] In that respect it is not unlike what Agostino Nifo will be writing a couple of centuries later, though from the different perspective of arms and letters (see below chap.3). But whereas Nifo is at pains to conceal his prejudices, Homodeis is undoubtedly much more impartial. Apart from the convincingness or lack thereof of his arguments, which as we have said remains a matter of opinion, the only time he takes sides (almost imperceptibly) is when he talks of "scientia nostra [quae] appelletur philosophia" (see above p.37 - my italics).

It is interesting that Homodeis should have chosen to take sides at this particular point. His calling jurisprudence a philosophy would indicate that he did not view his profession in narrowly technical and specialist terms; that instead he considered its scope to be far-ranging and its significance all-embracing; that he saw it as a science which reached out into other areas of learning and knowledge. His very lecture is a witness to this. Although its overall character and its explicit phraseology are of a legal nature, its implicit premises, its hidden pre-suppositions, even at times its terminology are philosophical (in the sense that they derive from a particular philosophical system). There can be little doubt that notions such as perfections ("bona"), such as the end ("finis") for which something exists and that of which it is made (whether adolescents or villains) - in other words its final and material causes (two of the four causes) -, such as moral virtues (fortitude, justice), such as something being superior for being more universal, such as its name being indicative of its essence ("nomina sunt consequentia rerum"), not to mention of course the syllogism which Homodeis uses as his didactic instrument, belong to an Aristotelian and Scholastic field of reference.[57] It is hardly surprising of course to find Homodeis conversant with such notions, since they were an integral part of the enviroment in which he was educated and to which he belonged throughout his life: the University. There the teaching of Aristotle and of the Schoolmen must have provided in those years the single most potent ideological force, second only perhaps, in the case of some universities, to the ideological influence of the corpus of Roman law. And Homodeis makes use of this philosophical jargon quite without hesitation: it is second nature to him.

Later, when knights and doctors give way to arms and letters, the philosophical aspect of the querelle will receive emphasis at the expense of its legalistic aspect, for those who take up the defence of learning begun (unwittingly perhaps) with the tools of their own trade by

doctors of law, will be doctors of a different sort and with a different training - doctors of philosophy and medicine - who are, as we shall see, avowed Aristotelians. But just as knights and doctors will always leave traces of themselves, even after arms and letters have been in the ascendant for many a decade,so too at this early stage do we get a premonition of what will be characteristic of the querelle in its later phase. Already now we can understand how the two phases have more in common than might at first sight seem probable, and how come doctors of medicine will be able to follow quite naturally in the path opened up by doctors of law.

Who these doctors of law were and the nature of doctorhood are the subject of a final argument in Homodeis's lecture, which is interesting not so much as an argument in itself as for the information it gives us about the doctorate of law and the insight it provides into the doctors' high esteem of their profession and own worth. It shows us too that the title of doctor was indeed no mere job-description, as we have already noted (see above p.28), but a distinction especially conferred, with a special aura of mystery about it. The argument is that the actual procedure of conferment, and one might even say the rites of conferment, given their significance, carry with them an automatic entitlement to precedence ("in doctorali consecratione signa adhibita 'sunt' praelationem significantia, per quae apparet, quod doctor debet praecedere"). The first stage of the ceremony is the "handing over" of the "Book of Law" - perhaps a copy of the Corpus iuris - by which the doctor is shown to become the law's guardian ("ita est, quod doctor ex libri iustitie traditione est illius effectus proprietarius et possessor"). The second step is the passing of a ring on to the doctor's finger ("anuli impositio"), a ring which signifies pre-eminence ("qui anulus praelationem denotat"); and the third step is the laying of a crown on the doctor's head, which signifies victory and is a hieratic symbol

("doctoris capiti imponitur diadema, quod est signum gratiae et victoriae ... et est signum sacerdotale cuius proprium est praeesse").[58] Such lofty words however end yet again with the mundane conclusion that doctors may therefore have precedence over knights. Grandiose though its expression may sound, the querelle seems originally to have been intended for very practical, not to say utilitarian purposes: to decide who was to walk in front of whom!

D. Ludovico Bolognini's edition of and additions to the "Quaestio" of Homodeis.

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which Homodeis's lecture survived for other jurists to consult in the years and decades after it had been delivered, but it was not forgotten altogether, for there are references to it in the works of at least two lawyers of the early fifteenth century, Martinus Laudensis and Petrus Lenauderius.[59] It was not therefore completely unknown when it was published by Ugone de Rugeris in Bologna in February 1489. Its editor was Ludovico Bolognini, a famous lawyer and a leading citizen of Bologna. Born in 1446, he studied law at the university there, under Alessandro Tartagni amongst others, graduated in civil law in September 1469, in canon law in August 1470 (having become a Doctor in October 1469) and in 1472 embarked on an academic career at his own university. He moved to the University of Ferrara in 1474, but was back teaching in Bologna in 1479, and he remained there until 1501, being on several occasions elected a member of the Anziani and holding other offices in the city's executive and judiciary. In 1501 he went to Florence and occupied various minor positions in the city administration until he was elected Podestà in 1503, but in 1505 he returned to his native city and his alma mater to become once again a member of the Anziani and later of the new government (the Quaranta Consiglieri e Riformatori) set up by Julius II after his "conquest" of Bologna in 1506. In 1507 Bolognini was Gonfaloniere di Giustizia and later that year he was sent by the Pope as ambassador to the King of France, to try and persuade the King to withdraw his support from the Bentivoglio party. He returned via Rome, where he was to report to the Pope on the outcome of his mission before travelling back to Bologna. On his way home he fell seriously ill and was not able to get beyond Florence, where he died in the monastery of San Miniato on July 27th 1508.[60] Throughout his career Bolognini had been an indefatigable editor of numerous legal texts, both

major and minor. In 1489 his reputation was already such that he had been knighted: in the introduction to the edition of Homodeis's lecture he calls himself "utriusque iuris doctor equesque auratus".

Bolognini edited Homodeis's lecture with many other legal texts, which were published all together in an enormous folio volume and dedicated to Alvise Capra, lieutenant of the Pope's legate in Bologna, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza.[61] The dedication is signed "Bologna University, November 15th 1488" ("datum in felicissimo Bononie studio, anno Domini Mcccclxxxviii die xv novembris"), and the date 1488 also appears in the title to Homodeis's Quaestio, which may suggest that it was the subject of a lecture before being sent to press, although this is no more than a guess as the title simply reads: "incipit solemnis disputatio preclarissimi monarce domini Signoreli de Homodeis de Mediolano de precedentia doctoris vel militis cum additionibus domini Ludovici de Bologninis de Bononia utriusque iuris doctoris prestantissimi equitisque aurati dignissimi, in vetustissimo Bononie Studio, anno Domini Mcccclxxxviii." The nature of the publication in which the Quaestio appears gives us an idea of Bolognini's intentions in editing these various texts; he is not providing a work of literature, an easy-to-read and easy-to-handle "pocket book" (like Beccadelli's Disputatione), but a legal text-book and work of reference. The nature of the actual edition of Homodeis's lecture however does denote certain literary aspirations on Bolognini's behalf, or at least a desire to relieve the tedium of Homodeis's compilation of arguments and to enliven the whole debate. Bolognini does not provide a simple edition of the Quaestio, but an edition with additions. These additions are twice the length of Homodeis's lecture and it is they which are of particular interest to our study. They constitute the next step in the development of the querelle.

The additions are not only interesting, but

intriguing. They purport to be reporting a public disputation on the subject of precedence which is taking place in the presence of a large and boisterous crowd of knights and doctors, each supporting their own side like fans their favourite football team. The contenders for the milites are Homodeis and Federigo di Montefeltro (1422-82), and for the doctores the jurist Francesco Accolti (1416/7-1488), with Bolognini and his teacher Alessandro Tartagni (1423/4 - 1477) acting as arbiters.[62] All the participants, except of course for Homodeis, were contemporaries of one another, and their being and debating together is therefore plausibly more than mere poetic licence, but because Bolognini does not explain the circumstances in which this public debate might have taken place and introduces us to it in media re, we are left to wonder whether it is entirely his invention or whether there is some element of reality in it. There is unfortunately no known manuscript of this particular work of Bolognini's to give us more background information on the matter (both the debate itself and the composition of the additiones), and we can therefore only go by what the printed text tells us. Sadly it tells us less than it leaves untold.

It is the presence of Federigo di Montefeltro which is most intriguing. He is the only contender who is not a lawyer and the only one moreover to play a silent part. In the introduction to the Quaestio (following the passage quoted in the previous paragraph), Federigo's intervention is announced in words which say quite clearly that he too will speak his mind on the subject:

in quibus additionibus [Bolognini] miro ordine introducit novum duellum inter illustrem ac excellentissimum in toto terrarum orbe iurisconsultum dominum Franciscum de Acoltis de Aretio pro parte doctorum tuenda loquentem et invictissimum ac iustissimum principem armorumque ducem et totius Italiae capitaneum benemeritum, dominum Federicum, Urbini dominum etc., pro parte militum defensanda loquentem, et ultimo loco per omnium concordiam introducit dominum Alexandrum Tartagnum Imolensem praeceptorem eius unicum, cuius sententie omnes acquievisse attestatur (p.48r°).

We never get to learn however what Federigo actually said,

if indeed he ever did say anything. Bolognini's introduction is followed immediately by Homodeis's lecture (by and large as it appears in the Florence manuscript, though with so many variants - all be they minor -, that one cannot exclude the possibility of a derivation from another manuscript).[63] After the lecture it is Bolognini who takes over again, and this is where something would appear to be missing. Indeed Bolognini implies that at this stage Federigo has also contributed his opinion to the debate, but we have not heard him utter a sound. Bolognini's additiones simply begin:

illustrissimus ac excellentissimus princeps et dominus,dominus Federicus Urbini etc., nec non dominus auctor Signorelus de Mediolano iuris eminentissimus (ut vides) hucusque argumentati sunt hinc inde ad partes militum solemniter et copiose in hac formosa et notabili et, ut ita dixerim, Caesarea decisione merito digna quaestione, quae habet utrum doctor insignis honoris et praecellentiae debeat praeferre [sic] militi, vel econtra, et tandem post multa concluserunt militem indistincte praecedere doctorem (p.25r° col.2). [64]

This is the last we hear of Federigo.

Mysterious though Federigo's opinion may remain to us, it met at the time (so we are told) with the enthusiastic approval of the large crowd of attending knights ("maxima militum turba ibi astante"). All of them ("duces et milites omnes") expressed their support for Federigo and Homodeis by hurling misquotations from Cicero at the doctors: "cedant armis togae!" they shouted.[65] Amid the ensuing uproar Bolognini is wondering whether Homodeis' misinformed opinion ought not really to be refuted, when suddenly "ecce surrexit in magna doctorum et militum corona illustris ille dominus Franciscus de Acoltis de Aretio" (p.25r° col.2) who, having managed to restore silence and bring about an uneasy truce, takes up the defence of the doctor, first with the help of twelve new arguments and then with a point by point refutation of Homodeis's pro-milites arguments. But Accolti's intervention makes things worse rather than better. The crowd gets even more excited and quotations and misquotations from Cicero are

now hurled from all quarters: "et tunc maxima hincinde caterva et doctorum et militum alta voce clamabat 'cedant arma togae' et econtra 'cedant armis togae', adeo ut omnia clamoribus plena sonarent et visum est mihi nos fore inter Syllam et Caribdim deductos"(p.27r° col.1). Fortunately the participants are saved from such an awful peril and led into calmer waters by the messianic intervention of Bolognini's teacher, and obviously much-admired teacher, Alessandro Tartagni, whose words are greeted with almost biblical fervour: "et ecce tunc surrexit divus Alexander Tartagnus Imolensis, dominus meus unicus, in quem omnium statim ora conversa sunt et oculi omnium in eum sperabant, et omnes quiescentes cum maxima humanitate gratiaque verba proferentem audiebant" (ibid.). By putting forward a compromise solution (the same we have come across in Beccadelli - see above pp.20-1 - and which would in fact appear to be of Tartagni's own making),[66] and by then asking Bolognini to confirm and clarify this solution, Tartagni manages to bring a lasting peace to the warring factions:

> et statim doctrinam domini mei supra relatam cum hac brevi additione mea omnes hincinde astantes, tam doctores quam milites, in maxima corona una nimiter pari voto et consensu et nemine discrepante comprobarunt, laudantes eius ingenij subtilitatem et facundiam et brevis sermonis tantam vim et substantiam, omnesque alta voce dixerunt, hic est ille pater toto memorandus in orbe, cui cedunt leges militiaeque duces (p.27v° col.1).

As in Beccadelli, the parties are thus reconciled and all is well that ends well. Only the reader is dissatisfied, for he is still left wondering whether he has been witnessing a real or an imaginary debate.

There is some evidence that, under the signoria of Taddeo de Pepoli, i.e. some time between 1327 and 1347, or in other words at about the same time as Homodeis delivered his lecture at Vercelli, a public debate was held in Bologna on the subject precisely of the contested precedence of knights and doctors.[67] It may well be that such debates were more frequent than the present state of our knowledge will allow us to surmize, and that if indeed one was held,

at Urbino or somewhere else in Italy, under the patronage and with the participation of Federigo di Montefeltro, it was part of a well established tradition, as well established perhaps as the literary querelle was amongest lawyers; but it will only be possible obviously to confirm or invalidate such a conjecture after much more and painstakingly archival research.

Bolognini's edition of Homodeis's lecture represents a new development in the querelle in that it brings it out into the open, as it were, and transmits it abroad through the medium of the printing press. It does so too in a memorable way by clothing it in a kind of narrative. For many jurists it will now represent the authoritative version of the debate, all the more so for being re-printed (together with all the other legal texts of the 1489 edition) in Turin in May of the following year and then again in Lyons in 1549, in the twelfth volume of a seventeen volume compilation of legal texts, and in Venice in 1584, in volume eighteen of a multi-volume Treatise of Universal Law.[68] Many lawyers will read it and quote from it in their commentaries, mentioning the opinion now of Homodeis now of Tartagni or Bolognini, or even of Federigo di Montefeltro. As late as 1689, one Domenico Maria Brancaccini, a Servite who describes himself as theologian to Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in chapter II, book III of his work De iure doctoratus (published in Rome), asks the question "num Doctor, vel Miles sit praeferendus?" and answers with Tartagni's compromise solution which, he says, even received the sanction of Federigo di Montefeltro:

cuius decisioni, Ducem illum invictissimum, etsi in sexies signa contulisset, octies hostem profligasset, ac totius Italiae confaederationis imperator factus, quasi alter suae tempestatis Caesar, omnium proeliorum victor extitisset, acquievisse, quippe qui scientiarum quoque vires optime noverat. 69

It is more than likely that Beccadelli too had read Bolognini's edition of Homodeis's lecture and been

influenced by "l'alta soa disputa". Is his calling Homodeis "quel monarcha" (see above p.31) not reminiscent of the opening words of Bolognini's edition: "incipit solemnis disputatio preclarissimi monarce domini Signoreli de Homodeis"? In fact there is nothing to speak of in the Disputatione which is not also to be found in Homodeis's Quaestio and Bolognini's additiones. Even the "drama" of the Disputatione is reminiscent of Bolognini's dramatisation of the querelle, with the two sides becoming in turn very elated about their respective privileges and indignant at their attempted usurpation until a third party settles the dispute with a compromise solution which is acceptable to both sides, the solution of Alessandro Tartagni. But if we can thus venture an explanation as to why Beccadelli wrote his Disputatione at the end of 1489, or at least with the sanction and inspiration of which model, we still do not know why it was precisely in 1488-89 that Homodeis was brought to light again. For the same reasons that we cannot go behind the printed versions we have, there are no hard facts to hand which at this stage can provide a satisfactory answer to this question, but in a later chapter, when the reader will have been introduced to the Arms and Letters querelle a suggestion will be put forward which will try and answer the question in terms of a cross-fertilization of the two querelles.

If Bolognini's edition and publication of Homodeis's lecture represents a new stage in the development of the querelle in formal terms, by transmitting it abroad, as we said, through the medium of the printing press, and if Bolognini showed some originality in his endeavour to enliven the debate by creating dramatic effects, in terms of contents there is nothing original to his additiones. The quotation and misquotation from Cicero may be misleading in this respect. They are by no means indicative of a new dimension in the nature and origins of the arguments. They are simply introduced to heighten the drama (such as it is), but otherwise Bolognini quotes exclusively from the corpus

of Roman law and its Glossators and Commentators. Where Bolognini does innovate however is by bringing together for the first time all the separate elements of the querelle, and in particular by adding Tartagni's compromise and the six knightly conditions of Accursius (see above p.29) to Homodeis's compilation of arguments. It is these conditions and this compromise which give sense to the debate, in that they allow for a synthesis and a solution to be reached. By providing an instrument of objective discrimination, they turn an otherwise formless list of often contradictory arguments (which is what Homodeis's lecture is on its own) into a meaningful discussion. It is in Bolognini's hands therefore that the querelle really takes shape. This explains why of course his work was so popular as to be reprinted on several occasions and quoted on many.

It is Tartagni himself who, in the additiones, presents his own compromise solution. He presents it more concisely and more clearly than Beccadelli will later manage to do in verse (see above p.21). This is how he does it:

videtur dici posse, quod in actibus doctoralibus sine dubio doctor praeferatur militi, et econtra in actibus militaribus miles praeferatur doctori ... Sed in actibus promiscuis seu neutralibus, primo praeferantur doctores existentes ad latus principis, et hi habent primum locum; secundum vero locum tenent milites, qui militant ad latus principis vel qui sunt equites Romani; tertium vero locum habent doctores excellentes, qui non sunt ad latus principis; quartum vero locum habent simplices milites; quintum vero et ultimum locum tenent doctorelli (p.27r° col.2). 70

Asked by Tartagni for his opinion on this point, Bolognini (the dramatis persona) replies with a pun - which is possibly the only truly original element in the whole text. Those doctorellos, he tells Tartagni, whom you put in fifth position, I would call dolores rather than doctores. Having thus struck at fake doctors (we are reminded of the Messer Nicias of this world), he next goes for fake knights, the "milites nostri temporis ... qui vadunt quotidie per plateas ... et vacant negociationibus et mercantijs." A true knight, Bolognini adds, may not be a merchant, and he has to satisfy five further conditions

as well (those of Accursius): "miles in assumptione militiae debet cingi ense, et stigma eius brachiis imponi, et scribi in numero aliorum militum, et examinari, et iurare non aufugere mortem propter rempublicam" (p.27r° col.2). As the knights his contemporaries clearly do not satisfy these conditions, they are not, says Bolognini, to be considered true milites and not therefore to enjoy the priviliges of milites.

This is Bolognini's last word on the matter and it is this solution (together with Tartagni's) which meets with the unanimous approval of the audience, including all the knights. One wonders what kind of knights they were (or Bolognini imagined them to be) and whether they assented from a position of strength, fake knights having been unmasked, or from a position of weakness, feeling unmasked themselves? One wonders too what kind of a knight Bolognini felt himself to be and how much he basked in the title of eques auratus. No doubt he set greater store by the dignity of his doctorate, for "quod doctor dicitur illuminare totum mundum ad obediendum Deo, casus est perpetuo menti tenendus" (p.25v° col.2).

E. Cristoforo Lanfranchino: Tractatulus seu questio utrum preferendus sit doctor an miles.

We have now seen the querelle of Knights and Doctors developing from modest beginnings in glosses to Justinian's Corpus iuris, growing through successive generations of commentaries and reaching full-bodied maturity in Bolognini's edition of Homodeis's Quaestio in 1489. One could say that at this point the genre is still only semi-independent, since Bolognini and Homodeis were not published on their own but as one of many treatises on a variety of subjects in a voluminous book, and that full independence would only have been achieved once a contribution to the querelle had been given a binding of its own. This stage will in fact be reached a few months later with the publication of Beccadelli's Disputatione, which is followed some eight years later by the publication of another autonomous work on the subject of knights and doctors (which could well however have been written earlier), Cristoforo Lanfranchino's Tractatulus seu questio utrum preferendus sit doctor an miles.

Whereas the Disputatione might be considered a slight deviation from the norm for being written in Italian and in verse, the Tractatulus is prosed in the traditional Latin jargon of the lawyers. It is a small quarto book, published in Brescia by Angelus Britanicus on July 8th 1497, and which survives today in only five libraries of northern Italy, at Brescia, Cremona, Milan, Turin and Venice. As far as we know there are no extant manuscripts of the work.[71] Lanfranchino's basic arguments are those with which the reader is all too familiar, yet his book is interesting and original in more ways than one. He adds his own touch to even the most common of arguments, his discussion ultimately goes beyond the traditional confines of the querelle and turns into a general discussion on nobility, and he quotes from a greater variety of sources, including the Bible and classical authors, than any of his predecessors. What is more, through the Tractatulus the

querelle is set in a particular social environment: Verona at the turn of the fifteenth century. This social context is at once more real and less real than the context of Beccadelli's Disputatione. It is more real in that Lanfranchino's contest for precedence is no mere post-prandial entertainment as is Beccadelli's, but a contest which both parties take very seriously, indeed almost passionately, as we shall shortly be seeing. On the other hand it is less real, because Lanfranchino is very vague in his allusions. He names no names and gives no dates, and yet he seems to be talking about specific incidents of disputed precedence between knights and doctors. Attempts to find out more about these incidents have however proved fruitless, as there have been few leads to follow.

We have for a start insufficient knowledge of Lanfranchino's biography. The title-page of the Tractatulus informs us that he was a lawyer from Verona: "clarissimi utriusque iuris interpretis domini Christophori Lanfranchini Veronensis Tractatulus". Before that he had been a student of rhetoric and a poet, and by the time he was writing the Tractatulus he had been knighted. This much we can gather from a letter to Lanfranchino written by one Paulo Andrea del Bene and published at the end of the work: "tu - says del Bene, addressing himself to Lanfranchino - qui utraque gaudes dignitate [i.e. doctorhood and knighthood] ... qui post eloquentiae studia et poeticam exercitationem etiam in hac scientia iuriscivilis elaboraris." Del Bene's letter also tells us that Lanfranchino held important offices ("magistratus insignes") both in Verona and other cities, and that he was sent on frequent missions to Verona's overlords, the Venetians ("frequentissimas legationes apud serenissimos Venetorum dominos"). Some of this information can be corroborated from other sources. There are several extant manuscripts which contain poems by Lanfranchino,[72] and in the Sanuto Diaries there is a mention of Lanfranchino being sent on an embassy to Venice on January 20th 1501 from Verona, to

protest his city's inability to raise the money demanded by Venice.[73] If this date is correct (and there is no reason to suppose that it is not), then an early nineteenth century biographer of Lanfranchino, Scipione Maffei, was probably mistaken when he said that Lanfranchino began lecturing at Ferrara University in 1448, unless Lanfranchino was very young when he embarked upon an academic career and old and venerable in 1501.[74] But he certainly does seem to have lectured at Ferrara, for the Vatican Library has a manuscript of an oration which he delivered there.[75] This is the extent of our knowledge about Lanfranchino. Of the Tractatulus itself all we know is that it was published in 1497. There is no reason to suppose that it was not also written that same year, but we have no evidence to prove that it was. It is preceded by a letter to Lanfranchino from one Bartolomeo Dolci, in which Lanfranchino is asked for his learned opinion on the contentious issue of precedence between knights and doctors. The Tractatulus is Lanfranchino's reply, and it is followed by the letter from Paulo Andrea del Bene, who congratulates Lanfranchino on what he has written. Neither of the letters is dated and the identity of their authors is obscure.[76] As to the actual contents of the letters and the Tractatulus, they shed little light on the circumstances which lay behind their composition.

In his letter Dolci says that "this year", as Lanfranchino is well aware, there has been a great increase in Verona in the number of "Golden Knights" and that these knights not only contend amongst themselves for precedence but even, to Dolci's great disgust, claim precedence over all doctors:

hoc anno, ut scis vir celeberrime, auctus est apud nos aureatorum militum numerus, qui inter se de praelatura contendunt, ut alter alteri nullo modo concedat. Sed, quod mea quidem sententia absurdius est ne dixerim temerarius, volunt doctoribus, quisquis ille sit, anteire et praeferri. Que res tantam mihi interdum indignationem generat et fastidium, ut vix aliquando prae nimia admiratione apud me sim. Et per deum, quis non stomachabitur, ubi viderit viros

doctissimos, qui aetatem suam consumpserint, ut sic dixerim, pro nanciscenda doctrina, qui totiens pro sua re publica elaboraverint et indefessi continue elaborant, ab istiusmodi militibus aureatis postponi et contemni (no pag.).

Lanfranchino begins the Tractatulus by voicing his own contempt for the ambition vanity and madness of those who fight for such a trifle as the right of precedence: "tutte sono bagatelle", he quotes a teacher (?) of his and Dolci's ("bonus ille pater") as having said. He again voices his contempt in a later passage of the Tractatulus, in terms which are slightly more specific and which, although they could have been more informative, do suggest at least that contests for precedence were all but daily occurrences: "video ego quotidie, non sine animi molestia, hos milites primum sibi capere locum supra vicarium et alios magistratos praetorios, quales sunt reliqui iudices et iudices consules curiae" (p.22r° col.1).[77] An equally strong, and equally hazy disgust is proffered by Paulo Andrea del Bene in his letter: "stomacarique non desino plerumque, quod presumptuose plurimi maiorum sibi usurpent loca, non quidem quia mihi negetur locus, quem omnibus caedo, sed quia videam plerosque ordinis nostri seniores patricios viros, virtute prestantissimos, modestia insignes, auctoritate illustres, consilio vigiliis indefessis laboribus pro nostra republica benemeritos, indigne postergari" (no pag.). These outbursts of indignation may provide us with no factual information, but their very vehemence is proof enough of how real, in this case at least, the competition between knights and doctors was. Lanfranchino and his lawyer friends - that much at least we may surmize about Dolci and del Bene, that they were lawyers - are not engaging in a literary debate for its own sake. They are banding together to defend the privileges of their caste, "ordinis nostri". And as one might have expected, Lanfranchino's Tractatulus tends entirely in that direction.

It begins with a review of the privileges of the milites, since the milites are of the opinion that they should come first. These privileges mainly concern matters

of inheritance, and Lanfranchino expresses his indebtedness for this section to Bartolus, Baldus and Salicetus.[78] Then come the privileges of the doctors, twice as many as the knights', and mostly regarding immunities (from torture, taxation etc.) and deference (how doctors are to be greeted, addressed, called etc.). Here again Lanfranchino quotes mainly from Bartolus and Baldus, with many references of course to the Corpus iuris itself. The impression one derives from this section is a clear pride of rank, with doctors honoured by everyone from the emperor downwards, and revered, as we have already seen, as priests: "tanta est reverentia, quae debetur doctoribus, ut merito apud leges sacerdotes appellantur" (p.22r° col.1- see above p.37). Having surveyed the respective privileges of knights and doctors, Lanfranchino next says that, for the question to be resolved, four points need to be taken into consideration, namely: whether the contemporary milites aureati are entitled to the privileges of milites as they appear in the Corpus iuris, whence the name miles derives, what the legal basis and definition of the res militaris is ("quid sit ius in quo consistat res militaris") and whether the militia is a dignity (i.e. a proof of nobility). In isolating these four issues Lanfranchino, like his predecessors but in more pointed a manner, reveals a definite parti pris: it is not doctorhood but only knighthood which is considered problematic. To the first question Lanfranchino gives a negative answer, based on the six knightly conditions of Accursius (see above p.29) and with particular emphasis on the necessity for a knight to abstain from agriculture and commercial activity for the exclusive sake of arms: "debent enim milites, qui gaudere volunt beneficio militari, dare operam armis, abstinere a cura agrorum et a negotijs privatorum" (p.22r° col.2). Given that the milites of the time "quotidie in plateis versantur et non in castris", they cannot claim entitlement to privileges, even though they may be registered knights ("licet hi nostri milites essent descripti in matricula militum"). The only privilege

which they may enjoy is that of wearing golden spurs. As regards the derivation of the name miles, Lanfranchino explains it in the very terms of the law "De testamento militis" (see above p.36), which again stress the military nature of knighthood. And so too do the legal basis and definition of res militaris: "ius militare est belli inferendi solemnitas, foederisque faciendi nexus, signo dato eggressio in hostem, vel pugnae commissio. Item signo dato receptio. Item flagitij militaris disciplina si locus deseratur, Item stipendiorum modus, dignitatum gradus, praemiorum honor, veluti cum corona vel torques donantur. Item praedae decisio et pro personarum qualitatibus et laboribus iusta divisio ac principis ratio" (pp.22r° col.2 - 22v° col.1). Finally and not surprisingly Lanfranchino repudiates the notion that knighthood is a dignity, whilst stressing of course that doctorhood is. At most knighthood can be considered a kind of honour (i.e. a kind of outward sign) granted in recognition of good conduct under arms: "potest dici quod, licet militia de se non sit dignitas, tamen est honor quidem, qui residet in bene militante" (p.22v° col.1). The only circumstances in which knighthood may be considered to be a dignity, or rather to have some dignity, is when it is conferred upon a man who already has a dignity, like for instance ... a doctor! "Ubi militia adderetur viro habenti dignitatem, et sic adderetur dignitati, utputa est quidam doctor qui postea efficitur miles, volunt doctores quod militia in eo homine sit dignitas. Non enim simplex militia est dignitas" (p.22v° col.1). With the words "volunt doctores" Lanfranchino takes his distance from this argument, as though not entirely convinced of its validity, and it is true that it contradicts what he had said earlier on. Granted that of the six conditions of knighthood in the glossa ordinaria, none says that a knight may not also be a doctor or a doctor become a knight (only a merchant is debarred from doing so), the other conditions all stress what Lanfranchino had also insisted upon, namely that knighthood is about arms and warfare. And as far as we know

those who, like Bolognini and Lanfranchino himself, styled themselves "utriusque iuris doctor equesque auratus", had never been trained for the military profession, let alone seen a battlefield. This however was a debate conducted by and for doctors, and legal weapons at least they knew how to wield to their own best advantage.

It is at this stage that the tone of Lanfranchino's Tractatulus becomes more impassioned. The emphasis subtly shifts from laws and arms to knowledge and riches, and the querelle all of a sudden acquires a new significance and dimension, with Lanfranchino striking out on his own and leaving aside the traditional and therefore more neutral jargon he had used so far. In so doing he shows quite obviously that he is writing not, like Beccadelli, to entertain and eulogize, not for more didactic purposes like Homodeis and Bolognini, and not for the mere sake of literary emulation, but out of a sense of personal frustration and moral indignation. Having proved that knights are not knights and knighthood not a dignity, whereas doctors are doctors and doctorhood is a dignity, he concludes that it is doctors who must therefore have precedence over knights. But this is not what is happening:

et per Deum immortalem quis non admirabitur, quis non damnabit horum militum insolentiam, qui nulla habita consideratione, nulla facta distinctione in doctoribus et virtutis et doctrinae ac aetatis, omnes contendant precedere. ... et profecto absurdum satis videtur, qui modo, ut sic dixerim, ex ludo literario processerit, et multo magis, qui literarum ignarus sit, velit ex hoc solo, quia sibi dictum sit "miles esto", nullis alijs praecedentibus meritis et qui nullos unquam pro sua republica labores passus sit, praecedere doctorem veteranum literatum et eruditum, qui multa agerit et plurima indefessis laboribus passus fuerit pro adiuvanda tuenda et augenda sua republica. Non sic, non sic repente currendum fuit. Discere oportuit eos prius bene militare et laboribus se prius assuefacere, ut postea sibi attentis laboribus et suis virtutibus debiti honores impenderentur ... Non est ergo aequum, non commendabile, ut deposito (sic dixerim) cremiale, quo in lanifitium utebantur - de his loquor, qui istiusmodi faciunt exercitia - et quorum parentes viliores etiam artes exercuere, quia gladio accinctus sit, ita in altum primo volunt salire, quod omnes Doctores velint anteire et iudices.

Discant, amor Dei, et se cognoscere et modestius agere. Nec tumeat aut superbiat quis, qui dicat se admodum divitem et propterea se nobilitatum et militiam se observare, tenendo equos famulos plures aves et canes pascere, quia responderi posset, hoc non esse bene militare, sed iactare suum. ... Nec unquam mihi persuaderi poterit, quod in divitijs consistat nobilitas, cum ille de se sint vilissimae (pp.22v° col.2 - 23r° col.1).

Nobility - true and false - is now the theme of the Tractatulus. It had always been, as we have seen, an underlying motif of the querelle, but never before had it assumed such importance. With Lanfranchino it is as though precedence is discussed as an excuse to introduce the subject of nobility, whereas before nobility had merely been discussed for the sake of establishing priorities. In this passage make-believe knights are revealed for what they are: vulgar and ignorant nouveaux riches, who see knighthood as a justification of their newly acquired wealth, a confirmation of the new social status to which they aspire, and a conferment of nobility upon themselves. Using knighthood as a pretext it is against these nouveaux riches, who themselves use knighthood as an alibi, that Lanfranchino, contemptuous of their wealth and of wealth in general, aims his invective. To them and their meretricious nobility, derived from extrinsic goods,he opposes the intrinsic and unforfeitable nobility of doctors. And doctors are no longer mere jurists. They have become the embodiment of all virtue and knowledge: no mere technical knowledge but knowledge in its broadest sense and knowledge furthermore whose function is to serve the commonweal and not to be simply an end unto itself. One might almost feel tempted to speak of "civic humanism", if one were not weary of the expression. But there is no doubt that, unlike Bolognini or Beccadelli, Lanfranchino has updated the querelle in line with new intellectual trends, that he is no longer content simply to rehearse the lawyers' hackneyed arguments, and that to him the querelle is more than a mere law-suit about ceremonial precedence. Against the backdrop of Veronese society it becomes, though admittedly in circumscribed terms, an essay on man and

society, on the function, aims and values of the rightful leaders of society, the true nobility. This nobility is not a nobility of wealth, or even a nobility of blood, but a nobility of personal merit and service: "quamvis sit quis ex humili genere natus, nec amplum a suis maioribus relictum sit sibi patrimonium, si tamen is liberalibus artibus diu exercitatus et in sacratissimis literarum studijs educatus fuerit, si modeste et iuste vixerit, si pro sua republica indefesse elaboraverit, si de religione bene senserit, si pius in parentes, si in amicos et coniunctos liberalis extiterit, num hic et clarissimus et nobilissimus habetur" (p.23r° col.2). It should be noted that by attacking the representatives of a new social class, the nouveaux riches, Lanfranchino is not setting himself up as a guardian of the old order and the panegyrist of an ancient warrior nobility. Far from it. He does condemn the nouveaux riches, it is true, for usurping the title of milites, but his attack is in fact two-pronged. He not only derides "tradesmen" for having the wrong notion of nobility as wealth, but also for seeking ennoblement in the wrong direction, since in any case knighthood is not a dignitas. So it is of a "third order" that Lanfranchino sings the praises, an order which, regardless of social origins and circumstances, has followed the only true pathway to nobility, the "sacred study of letters".

Just as in his arguments Lanfranchino goes beyond the traditional confines of the querelle, so too at this stage does he turn to other sources for the confirmation of his ideas. Instead of medieval Roman lawyers, he now quotes classical Roman authors. He mentions Cicero's contempt for riches in the De officiis, Marius's harangue to the Senate (in Sallust's De bello jugurthino) about the greater worth of self-made nobility, and the oration Pro habenda Lucretia in which Gaius Flaminius boasts of being noble, not of the deeds of others but of his own.[79] And was not Socrates noble, asks Lanfranchino, even though his

mother was a midwife and his father a marble-worker? And Demosthenes, even though of unknown parentage?

Having soared to such heights, Lanfranchino comes down to earth again with quite a thump and the ending of the Tractatulus is disappointingly uninspired. We return to Bartolus, Baldus and their peers with the conclusion that "therefore" the doctor must precede the knight. This statement is also accompanied by its usual rider, Tartagni's compromise:

aut contenditur de actu militari, quia aliquid discutiendum sit bello vel armis, et certe miles debet praecedere doctorem et eius dicto potius staretur; aut sumus in actu doctoreo, puta quia aliquid disputandum et discutiendum sit de iure, et eo casu doctor debet praeferri militi; ... aut sumus in actu indifferenti, et ita doctori sicut militi pertinenti et communi, ut est in sedendo eundo loquendo et his similibus, et doctor de iure debet praecedere militem ratione suae dignitatis (p.23r° col.1)

Such lofty words, simply to resolve a question of straightforward precedence: who may speak before whom, who may sit before whom and who may walk in front of whom! The deflation is bad enough, but it goes even further. In his final paragraph Lanfranchino recants almost everything he had said about true nobility, by now granting precedence to knights of noble ancestry: "ego autem putarem hoc dictum limitandum esse, nisi miles ille esset longe superior et aetate et antiqua maiorum nobilitate dicto doctore, quia eo casu putarem militem praeferri debere" (p.23r° col.1). Lanfranchino is here talking about real milites, not dubbed nouveaux riches, and in truth he does not contradict his earlier conclusions altogether. He still maintains that knighthood as such is not a dignity, but just as it acquires dignity in a doctor by being conjoined to doctorhood, so here too does it acquire dignity through being united with old age, the renown and prestige of a family (from which the knight in question must not have degenerated) and personal virtue and goodness. What Lanfranchino actually seems to be attempting in his closing words is to conteract any offence his Tractatulus might have caused to members of noble families of Verona:

"venerenda profecto semper est senectus, sed maxime colenda in viro optimo et virtute propria decorato et maiorum suorum gloria et titulis coruscante, quales plures sunt in civitate nostra; cum quibus, propter eorum praestantiam et integritatem, non arbitror aequum esse de praelatura contendere, quos ut vere patritios ac patriae patres venerari et coli censeo" (p.23r° col.1).

In spite of its parochial genesis, the Tractatulus was in due course to reach a wider audience and to receive sanction as an authority on knights and doctors. It was republished in a hefty legal treatise, together with Bolognini and Homodeis, in Lyons in 1549 and in Venice in 1584.[80] By that time however the querelle had long since been reconfined to legal commentaries, where it remained a familiar topic for debate though until well into the seventeenth century. The period of autonomy it had enjoyed at the end of the fifteenth century was shortlived. No further work was to be published independently on the subject after the first edition of Lanfranchino's Tractatulus. The genre was possibly too technical and rigid to survive on its own. No sooner had it detached itself from its original element (the corpus of Roman law) than it was coupled with other material: encomium in the case of Beccadelli, and a discussion on nobility in Lanfranchino's case. Once let loose in other words, it tended to become metamorphosed, even at the hands of specialists. It is little wonder therefore that, when seized upon by non-specialists (i.e. people who were not lawyers), it should have become something quite different. That is how the querelle of Arms and Letters was born.

Arms and letters had already been in the air for some time when the querelle of Knights and Doctors sought independence at the end of the fifteenth century. Indeed it is quite probably because they had been, as we shall be seeing, that knights and doctors made their

exceptional sortie into open ground, and then because of the greater popularity and amenability of arms and letters that knights and doctors were ultimately defeated as a purely literary genre. Before we turn to arms and letters however, we must go back in time,in order to investigate some instances of the debate which occurred at the margins so to speak of the querelle of Knights and Doctors proper. They will show us that the theme was also well-known outside strictly legal circles, and how it inevitably tended to be transformed when those who handled it were not lawyers.

Chapter II

AT THE MARGINS OF THE QUERELLE OF KNIGHTS AND DOCTORS

A. Flavio Biondo: Borsus.

The text which is closest in purpose to the tradition of the querelle, although it is quite different in its arguments, is Flavio Biondo's Borsus. It has been known to scholars for quite some time, but mostly under the name given to it by Biondo's earliest biographers and historians: De militia et iurisprudentia. There are three extant manuscripts of it, one of them (in the Vatican) an autograph, and two modern editions, one published in Germany in 1892, the other in Italy in 1927.[1] It has not however, and understandably so, been ranked as one of Biondo's most significant works. The Dizionario biografico degli italiani actually dismisses it as an uninteresting summary of the Roma triumphans, which Biondo wrote in pressing economic circumstances to catch the benevolent eye of Duke Borso d'Este.[2] It is dedicated to Borso and named after him, in the hope that it might be saved from oblivion by the stamp of his authority. Borso is also called upon, with all his wisdom and expertise, to act as the final adjudicator of the dispute with which it deals.[3]

The dispute is said to have arisen out of a disagreement over seating arrangements between knights and doctors who were taking part in the Diet of Mantua. Biondo was at that time in Mantua in the following of Pius II (he stayed there from May 27th 1459 until January 19th 1460), and the dispute was referred to him for settlement by some of the participants in the Diet. This at least is the story which has been retold in connection with the Borsus; but I have not been able to ascertain whence it originated and the text itself does not give us precise enough information to either prove or disprove it.[4] It is dated in Mantua on January 16th 1460 and Biondo does indeed admit to having been asked for his opinion on the matter, but he does so in vague terms, which evoke more a long-standing social and literary debate than they do a particular

instance of contested precedence:

> peropportune accidit, mi Borse, dux illustrissime, praestantes a me viros efflagitasse, solvi, quae diu multos agitat cum alios tum maxime principes vires, quaestionem, multis mihi rationis difficillimam, praesertim consideranti una in parte armis, in altera legibus deditos decertare, qui ambo consueverint non magis victoriam appetere quam certamen. Pervetustaque est ea contentio et quae omnibus in provinciis, civitatibus et oppidis saepenumero habeatur, utra scilicet eorum pars praeferri honore et dignior haberi debeat (p.131).

At first Biondo expresses reluctance to accept the task, as he has had no experience of military life, little practice in the law, and is not familiar with the terms of the debate; but he then finds his inspiration in the recently completed Roma triumphans, from which he makes no secret of having cribbed the text of the Borsus: "ea, quae in Triumphante de utriusque primariis viris semper in Romana re publica plurimi habitis scripta sunt a nobis, a vetustissimis vatibus sumpta, suo in cuiusque partis loco accumulata afferemus, ut ipsi milites, ipsi pariter iureconsulti ea legentes nostramque opinionem, quo ex fonte ducamus, intelligentes, nobis aequiore animo acquiescant" (p.131). The Borsus in other words might have been a kind of publicity stunt for the Roma triumphans: a "leaflet" (it is only some ten pages long) written to whet the appetite of Duke Borso and other mighty moneyed men for the Triumphans through the medium of a better-known and more popular genre (the querelle). Certainly the Borsus serves more as a display of Biondo's erudition than as a useful guide to the solution of precedence controversies. As we shall be seeing, its practical value is almost nil.

On the surface, Biondo's method in the Borsus is very simple. He begins with a definition of militia and by sorting out the various types of milites which existed in ancient Rome, and having then looked at the privileges they enjoyed, he organizes them into a hierarchy. With the lawyers he proceeds in very much the same way: first a definition of law and justice, then a categorization

of the different types of lawyers found in ancient Rome, and finally their hierarchical organization. In the last section of the Borsus he attempts to fit the lawyers and milites of his own day into the old Roman categories, which he then compares to one another, whilst examining their relative claims to precedence.

The militia comes first because Romulus, when he founded Rome, created milites before he established laws (Homodeis, it will be remembered, had begun his defence of milites with the very same point - see above p.32). The definition which Biondo gives of the militia is also one with which we are familiar:(see above p.36) "militiam a milite et militem aut a duritia, cui innutriri debet, aut a numero mille militum, quos singulae trium tribuum conditae urbis principio mittebant, dictum esse constat" (p.132). There were seven categories of milites in ancient Rome, of which the most exalted was that of the equites. The equestrian order ranked second only to the order of senators, all judges in capital cases were chosen from within its ranks, and what is more tax collection in the whole empire was the sole responsibility of equites. Apart from the equites, there were the classici, who were not wholehearted milites, as they had to be paid. Then there were the dimissanei, reserve milites for times of danger with an honourable discharge to their credit. The tutuli, according to Ulpian, were milites who had been granted the permission to stay behind in order to protect the country; but according to Seneca (whose opinion Biondo prefers), they were milites who had been dismissed for being useless when danger was at hand. Milites appointed to stay behind for the sake of procreation and to guard the country were called proletarii. Beneficiarii were, by special grant from the emperor, exempted from conscription but still ranked as milites, and finally the legionarii were full-time milites who, once they had been ascribed to a legion, could not leave it, whether in time of war or peace.

To the milites, especially the better sort, Rome owed her greatness. She therefore showed them great deference and gave them much praise, as we learn from the mouth of Cicero in Pro Murena:

at nimirum, dicendum est enim quod sentio, rei militaris virtus praestat ceteris omnibus. Haec populo Romano, haec huic urbi aeternam gloriam peperit, haec orbem terrarum parere huic imperio coegit; omnes urbanae res, omnia praeclara nostra studia et haec forensis laus et industria latent in tutela et praesidio bellicae virtutis; simul ac increpuit suspicio tumultus, artes illico nostrae conticescunt. Quod si ita est, cedant, opinor, Sulpici, forum castris, otium militiae, stilus gladio, umbra soli.5

The milites were therefore a class apart in Roman society, a special group with special duties and special privileges. The privileged position of the militia is evidenced, according to Biondo, by the fact that all Roman imperatores, whether in republican or imperial times, came from its ranks, and by the fact that in theatres the best seats were always reserved for milites, and the fact too that milites could bequeath their belongings as and how they wished. Of course these privileges were not an automatic entitlement, but had to be earned through good behaviour and upright living: "dignos vero tantis honoribus et tanta gloria milites legum observantia et vitae sobrietas, castitas atque integritas et erga suos innocentia ut redderet, oportuit" (p.135). Severe punishments were prescribed for milites who infringed this code of behaviour.

Just as their inward qualities were meant to set Roman milites apart from the crowd, so too did their external appearence. The next section of the Borsus therefore deals with Roman military dress and its distinguishing features, especially golden insignia, since the use of golden spurs made this a contentious issue in Biondo's own time. Roman milites, says Biondo, would wear golden rings, have gold on their horses' phalerae, on bracelets, on their shoulders, or around their neck, but never at their heels! This is not the only time he will aim his

thrust at what he sees as the ignorant and showy pretence of his contemporary Golden Knights ; and as if to undermine their self-importance even further, he closes his remarks on the sartorial habits of Roman milites with the reminder that when they returned to civilian life, they would doff their military uniform and don their toga like normal citizens.

Finally turning to their order of merit, Biondo says that of all the milites the equites were the most dignified and the dimissanei only slightly inferior to them. The legionarii came next, especially if their worth had been enhanced by an honourable discharge. Proletarii and beneficiarii, who may be said to have belonged to the same category, were of little standing and really used the name milites improperly. As for the tutuli they were the vilest of the vile and outright usurpers of the name miles. But the classici fare still worse in Biondo's pecking order: they no longer even get a mention.

With defining law and dividing lawyers into categories Biondo faces a more difficult task. The ancient authors (the "vetustissimi vates"), he warns us, are not too clear on the subject. He gives us not one but eight definitions of lex and leges, beginning with Cicero's "est enim lex nihil aliud nisi recta et a numine deorum tracta ratio, imperans honesta, prohibens contraria" (p.137) and "ut corpora nostra sine mente, sic civitas sine lege" (p.138),[6] to which he adds a few definitions of iustitia and ius, ending up with the quotation from the Corpus iuris in which lawyers are called priests (see above p.37). This is followed by a more thorough investigation of the nature of law (public, private, natural, civil etc.) before we are introduced to the various categories of ancient Roman lawyers. A simple classification is to be found in Cicero, but Biondo confesses to finding it unhelpful and confusing: "legum ministri magistratus, legum interpretes

iudices".[7] Who were these judges, asks Biondo? Have we not just seen that equites too could perform as judges? He therefore has to turn to other (unnamed) sources. At the top of the ladder he finds the iureconsulti, always held in high esteem, who were the guardians and interpreters of the non-written legal tradition. As to those men who were involved daily in legal practice, defending life liberty and property, it is not clear to Biondo what they were actually called, unless it be advocati or patroni. They were what in modern terms one might call barristers-at-law, and beneath them there milled a crowd of shady causidici. First the obturbatores whose function it was to cause delays in the proceedings so as to allow better lawyers the time to get ready before making an appearance. Next the subscriptores, who helped the prosecution by whispering in its ears. The praevaricator was in collusion with the defence and he would tell lies and give false testimonies in order to have the charges transferred unto somebody else. The cognitor would appear to have been some kind of solicitor who instructed "barristers" on the case in hand, and the procurator acted on behalf of an absentee. Nowadays, Biondo concludes, all these lawyers, from the iureconsulti down, are called doctors of law or notaries: "suntque hi iureconsulti patroni advocati obturbatores praevaricatores subscriptores cognitores procuratores; quibus omnibus unica nunc est doctoris legum aut notarii appellatio" (p.141).

When modern lawyers first began to call themselves doctors, Biondo finds it difficult to say, but, he surmizes (wrongly), it cannot have been much before the turn of the century, for in many papal documents of the last three hundred years they are called iudices. As to who first devised the method of conferring doctorates, he was not able to find a single doctor who could provide him with a clear answer: "quis autem primus fuerit, qui modum vel potius artificium doctorandi et doctores auro ornandi adinvenerit, nec invenire potui nec ab ipsorum aliquo intelligere."[8]

Having thus shifted his attention to the present, Biondo's next step will be to classify present-day milites and doctores according to the ancient Roman scheme. But first he feels compelled to introduce a linguistic proviso regarding the modern usage of the words miles and eques. Since the appellation of miles is being abused and usurped nowadays by even the unworthiest of soldiers, with the result that many of wiser counsel have begun to call themselves equites, when Biondo speaks of equites, he will take the title as referring only to the better sort: "eo militis nomine cuiusvis abiecti manipuli contubernales commilitonesque profitentur, quamquam nonnulli ex nostris doctiores prudentiore consilio se se equites appellare coeperunt. Quo nos etiam vocabulo cum utemur, praestantiores ex ipsis ubique per orbem terrarum intelligi volumus" (p.142). This remark, which, as Biondo proceeds, will turn out to have been neither too necessary nor very useful, and which the modern reader could well have wished to be less vague, is nevertheless revealing in view of the sometimes indiscriminate use made by some of our other authors of the two words in question; [9] and it will be worth bearing it in mind for a later chapter, when we investigate the social background of the querelle. At all events, modern equites, honest and rich though they may be and however much they may fancy themselves as the peers of the equites of ancient Rome, cannot in any way be considered of the same standing, for the simple reason that the universal Roman Empire has ceased to exist and that they therefore belong to a totally different order of things. If however they manage to imitate ancient equites in integrity modesty faith liberality and other virtues, they ought to be given precedence over their fellow-citizens, except for top ecclesiastical prelates and top magistrates; and this should apply as well to an eques of small means and obscure origins who, through this imitation of ancient examples, has shown himself to be equal to a wealthy eques of ancient lineage. On the other hand if there should be an eques who is neither outstandingly good nor exceptionally bad, but who has served honourably

as a paid soldier ("stipendiarie") or who has otherwise led an honourable life, and in the event that he be registered as a Golden Knight, and as long as he sets greater store by righteousness than by this distinction, defending justice, protecting orphans and widows and at all times seeking nothing but the honour and glory of his country, he is to be ranked a dimissaneus. To the Roman proletarii, beneficiarii, legionarii and tutuli Biondo equates two categories of modern milites: men of little virtue who are burdened rather than honoured with that title by princes who hold it of little account, and men who, aware of their own ineptitude but desirous of being honoured though unable and unwilling to deserve it through virtue and honesty, aspire to be decorated with golden spurs which, even though they are unworthy of them and to the great indignation of all and sundry, they manage to acquire by simply producing the money. As for the doctors of law, only a few nowadays can be compared to the iureconsulti of old. They are the doctors who teach at universities, offering legal advice and resolving difficult points of law. To the ancient patroni and advocati only the modern consistoriales advocati can be equated, who take up cases in the Curia before the Pope and the College of Cardinals. The present-day obturbatores, praevaricatores and subscriptores are all those doctors who, through their ignorance, "pollute" doctorhood to such an extent (because of their numbers) that better doctors have become ashamed of using that title: "obturbatores autem, praevaricatores et subscriptores illi ex nostris aetatis nostrae legum doctoribus videntur esse, qui, cum paucas aut nullas sciant litteras, ipsum inquinant doctoratum; quorum quidem tanta nunc est multitudo, ut nonnullos ex dignioribus nobis amicissimos doctoratus proprii propter illos paenitere et pudere viderimus" (p.143).

In Roman times the best equites had precedence over the worthiest of iureconsulti, but the revolutionary changes occasioned by the disappearence of the Roman Empire ("per factam insignem vel potius enormem imperii Romanorum

status et condicionis mutationem") have caused *equites* to fall from their status more so than *iureconsulti*; yet if one can find *equites* and *dimissanei* of great virtue rectitude and power, they are to receive preferential treatment over *iureconsulti patroni* and *advocati* of the same nature. If there should be an equal amount of lesser virtue, rectitude and power on either side, all are to be equally honoured. *Equites* and *dimissanei* of even indifferent authority and life-style are preferable to *obturbatores praevaricatores* and *subscriptores*, and even mediocre *iureconsulti patroni* and *advocati* are superior to *proletarii beneficiarii legionarii* and *tutuli*. If however, in this day of immoderate ambition and iniquity, someone, because of the golden spurs he happens to have at his heels, should want precedence over even the worthiest of *iureconsulti patroni* and *advocati*, it will be up to the prince or whoever has authority at the time to restrain such impudence. But if *proletarii beneficiarii legionarii* and *tutuli* should be contending for precedence with *obturbatores praevaricatores* and *subscriptores*, there can be no other remedy than to let them fight it out amongst themselves with strikes and blows, to the great amusement of the assembled multitude:

sin vero proletariis beneficiariis legionariis et tutulis comparati milites nostri, obturbatoribus praevaricatoribus et subscriptoribus legum doctoribus se praeferent; si e contra etiam hi resistere illis et anteponi contendent, nullam meo consilio curam vel princeps vel praelatus quispiam assumet, sed utrosque cum auro suo invicem contendere et rem non quidem gladiis sed pugillis agere cum adstantium cachinno permittet (p.144).

These are the closing words of the *Borsus*. Reading them one cannot help but feel that Biondo could not get himself to take his subject-matter too seriously. His solution to cases of disputed precedence is at best a wrestling match and at worst would have required the setting up of a special commission to investigate the life-style ancestry wealth integrity and education of knights and doctors in order to establish whether they were *equites*

or dimissanei, iureconsulti or patroni or worse, and to grant or deny them precedence accordingly. What it was in fact which Biondo could not take seriously was the actual querelle. It seems to have mattered little to him whether knights really had precedence over doctors or vice versa, as long as he could write a history of ancient Rome. He was, as we said, trying to kill two birds with one stone: to satisfy those who had asked him for his opinion on the question of precedence and at the same time to draw the attention of men of influence (Borso in particular) to the existence of the Roma triumphans. That is why he ends up by nullifying his own endeavours (if we consider them strictly from the perspective of the querelle, i.e. of establishing priorities between knights and doctors). Having gone to great lengths to discover all the categories of milites and lawyers which existed in ancient Rome and to organize them into a hierarchy, when it came to applying these categories to his own day and age, he had no alternative but to lump together again what he had so painstakingly sorted out, because they simply did not make sense in modern terms. Biondo had been presented with a legal problem and he tried to solve it as a philologist and historian, who was aware that the gap between the past and the present was unbridgeable, in a way which the Roman lawyers who were writing on the querelle were not. They too in a sense were imposing an outdated model on to a modern situation, but they did not see it in that way. For them what had been, still was. Rome still existed; the Corpus iuris was there to witness that. They could talk of the Roman emperor, as we have seen, as though he were still a living reality. Biondo on the other hand was only too painfully aware that what had been, simply was no longer. Rome no longer existed and he never tires of reminding his readers of the "factam insignem vel potius enormem imperii Romanorum status et condicionis mutationem". Because of this Biondo does not take anything for granted as the lawyers do. Everything is subjected to his philological and historical scrutiny. Unlike the lawyers therefore it is

not just knighthood which he considers problematic, but doctorhood too. Despite his different approach though, Biondo owed a lot to the traditional querelle. After Cicero it is the Corpus iuris he quotes most frequently. He does, it is true, try to conceal the fact, by referring to it simply as the words of Ulpian. In that way he satisfied his philological urge which impelled him to seek truth in the original etymology of words and allowed him to quote only from classical authors ("vetustissimi vates"), whom he saw as the repositories of that truth, the non plus ultra. And by presenting the Corpus iuris as the work of Ulpian, he manages to make believe it is a classical text.

Biondo could not help but approach the subject according to the rules of his own craft, he could not help but use terms and sources with which he was more familiar (he himself admitted, as we saw, not to be conversant with the legal tradition and jargon); nevertheless there was no doubt in his mind that the Borsus was part of a well-established genre. "Pervetusta est ea contentio" he says in the opening lines, and the contentio is that between knights and doctors.

B. Giovanni d'Arezzo: De medicinae et legum praestantia, and Leon Battista Alberti: De commodis litterarum atque incommodis.

Another well-established genre at the time was the Law versus Medicine querelle, in which doctors of law are brought to grips with doctors of medicine, though not over a question of straightforward precedence but in a debate about the relative nobility and utility of their respective disciplines. This querelle, which has more in common by its tenor with the Arms and Letters querelle than it has with the querelle of Knights and Doctors, is better known to modern scholars than either of these and has been the object of more research.[10] Its most famous contributor was Coluccio Salutati,[11] but the text which is of interest to us is by the physician Giovanni d'Arezzo and is a dialogue entitled De medicinae et legum praestantia. It was written in Florence shortly after the death of Piero de' Medici in 1469 and was dedicated to Lorenzo his son.[12] It is only because of its concluding remarks, which are a witness to the popularity of the querelle of Knights and Doctors, that it is deserving of our attention, for it is not otherwise relevant to the subject of this thesis.

The three interlocutors of the dialogue are Carlo d'Arezzo, who does most of the questioning, Leonardo Bruni, who provides most of the answers, and Niccolò Niccoli, who assents and dissents in turn. The discussion, which aims to prove the superiority of medicine over law, is said to have arisen out of the recent and sudden metamorphosis of an ignorant Florentine silversmith into a famous and respected physician, and the resulting amazement of the speakers at the credulity of the masses. After many and lengthy exchanges of views, they turn in the end to commenting upon the ill manners of most contemporary physicians, and just as Bruni has spoken his last words, Carlo, quite unexpectedly, asks him to resolve one final doubt: "quis dignior habendus, legum doctor an miles?" The

informed reader would no doubt expect this question to trigger off all the usual arguments. Bruni however does not wish to become involved in yet another controversy, especially as his doing so is likely to arouse the anger of knights. He therefore throws the ball back at Carlo: "de hoc ego vel nescio, vel potius nolo in verba prorumpere. Nam me forsan velles hodie malam aliquam gratiam cum militia mea sponte emere. Tu tamen huius rei verior satis arbiter esse potes; sed quod ipsi ex sese tantopere sunt prolassi, aut sibi ab aliis concessum est, cedamus" (p.98). Carlo, it turns out, is no keener than Bruni on prolonging the discussion and so he dismisses the matter in a few words: "numquam ego hoc mihi suasi, quod unius vaginati ensis ictus, maximum scientiarum decorem longo tempore partum, ac magnis laboribus et sumptibus emptum, dignitate praevincere debeat" (p.98).

Since the question is dispatched so cursorily, one wonders why the author should have bothered to bring it up in the first place. It certainly adds very little to the dialogue as a whole, and being so brief it is not of much interest in itself. It may well be that Giovanni d'Arezzo intended it as a form of apology to doctors of law. Having spent so much time on "depreciating" their profession, he did not want to end without paying them a compliment too. But to introduce this compliment - if that is what it is - he uses the very vocabulary of the querelle, and it is really as though he did not want to let the opportunity pass of adding his own opinion, however succinctly, to a topical debate, The opportunity was a good one, since he was in any case talking about doctors of law and their claims against members of another profession, and the debate must have been topical indeed to be mentioned quite so abruptly and without so much as a word of explanation to the reader.

It is difficult to gauge from these few lines (as indeed it is even from longer passages and texts) whether

the debate was topical in Florence at the time mainly for literary reasons - i.e. whether Giovanni d'Arezzo touched upon the querelle so as to be culturally à la page - or whether it was actual social conflicts which made it so. The way in which Carlo d'Arezzo phrases his question evokes literary precedents, but in his closing remarks one can sense real indignation at the insolence of knights who claim that might is right. And Bruni's reluctance to enter the fray also suggests a live controversy. It is not the debate as such he objects to. He does not want to descend to the level of obstreperous knights. "Let them have what they want" he therefore says, as disenchantedly as Pietro Zagni, twenty years later, will be saying to the knights of Bologna: "precedete, poi che non vel veda/ la prava abusion de questa Terra" (see above p.19).

There is also an echo of the querelle of Knights and Doctors in Leon Battista Alberti's De commodis litterarum atque incommodis, another text written against the backdrop, it is presumed, of Florentine society, though some fo/rty years prior to the composition of Giovanni d'Arezzo's De medicinae et legum praestantia.[13] Here too the querelle makes a sudden and unexpected appearance, and here too it gets dismissed after only a short while.

The man-of-letters who is the subject of the De commodis is a man with a clear vocation, a man who will devote his entire life to learning and knowledge, and spend it "in litteris occupatus, inter libros involutus, atque inter chartulas sempiterne sepultus" (p.64),[14] but he is not someone who has any obvious social function. Alberti, it is true, does mention teachers writers ("scribae") lawyers physicians and theologians (priests) as being various types of men-of-letters, since their training is predominantly literary, but the man-of-letters he mostly has in mind is more likely than not to have no practical experience and therefore to be unfit for public office, whilst knowing all there is to know about the heavens the

planets the gods and the souls of men. He thus seems quite above the fray of daily existence, when all of a sudden he becomes involved in a mundane conflict for precedence with the "order of knights":

qua igitur ratione compertum est, ut equester ordo in publicis cetibus litteratos antecedat, aut quivis ex ordine equestri litterato comparetur? Qua impudentia rudem, inexpertum rerum, atque plerunque temerarium militem litteratis omnibus anteponamus? Hec ego non institutis maiorum, sed insolentia et temeritate quadam militum id sibi arrogantium in usum accessisse arbitror. Nisi forte maiores nostri iudicarint litteris quam auro minus habendum esse honoris. Alioqui perversa ratio, turpis mos, iniusta licentia est, hunc militem preponere, in quo nullus virtutis, morum, aut sapientie splendor inest. Quive tantum gemma et auro se velit admodum conspicuum videri: hunc vero litteratum postponere, qui moribus, virtute, ingenio, litterarum ac rerum optimarum cognitione ac ratione sit probatissimus atque clarissimus. Sed missam faciamus hanc disceptationem recte ne miles preponatur, quamquam quidem ea ipsa disceptatio esset hoc quoque loco non negligenda (p.124).

What, one wonders, would Alberti's single-minded absent-minded scholars be doing in public processions ("publicis cetibus")? And who are the knights who refuse to grant them precedence? There can be little doubt about the sincerity of Alberti's indignation, but one cannot help but suspect that the inspiration behind this passage is to a great extent literary. The very words with which he dismisses the subject are an obvious verbal reminiscence of the querelle; add "an doctor" and you have the title of any of the works we have studied so far: "hanc disceptationem recte ne miles an doctor preponatur." But it was litteratos and not doctores Alberti was talking about, and he therefore had to recognize that the querelle, well-known though it may have been ("hanc disceptationem") and however much he would have liked to debate the matter ("quamquam ... ea ipsa disceptatio esset ... non negligenda"), was not relevant to his argument. Indeed it was not even real knights at whom he was aiming his invective: an equester ordo maybe but not true milites. The function of a true knight, as he then goes on to say, is to protect the commonweal with his arms: "at dicamus militiam esse publicum aliquod munus militisque ipsius munus et officium

esse non mediocris negocii virgines, viduas, destitutas atque indefensas, atque pupillos, atque pauperes omnes, eiusmodique afflictos omnes una et rempublicam omnem sua ope, rebus et armis tueri, tegere, atque defendere" (p.124). The equites whom we see contending for precedence with litterati in the De commodis were not, it would appear, fulfilling this function, and their mark of distinction moreover was not arms but gold. This could be a reference to the golden spurs of Golden Knights , but the expression is ambiguous and could equally well refer to the gold with which those spurs were purchased. Certainly when Alberti reprimands his forebears for showing less respect to "litteris quam auro", one imagines florins rather than arms as the real rivals of letters in Florence, and one is reminded of the words of Adovardo in Della famiglia: "non patisce la terra nostra che de'suoi alcuno cresca troppo nelle vittorie dell'armi ... Né anche fa la terra nostra troppo pregio de' litterati, anzi più tosto pare tutta studiosa al guadagno e cupida di ricchezze."[15] There is no doubt that wealth is seen as the main enemy of learning in the De commodis and the wealthy as the chief usurpers of precedence. Having written but half a page about knights, Alberti spends a good four pages on the indignities and affronts which men of letters have to suffer at the hands of rich men. The rich man says of the man of letters: "quid illi assurgam? Quid cedam e via? aut discopriam? Quid mihi cum illo est negocii? Novit litteras, quid ad me?" (p.126). Here again the problem is at first presented as one of straightforward precedence ("quid cedam e via?"), but what then becomes the main butt of Alberti's harangue are the prejudices of the rich man who says:"novit litteras, quid ad me?" It is not in fact the contest for precedence as such which preoccupies Alberti, but the contest for precedence insofar as it signifies a conflict of ideologies: smug ignorance opposed to learning, materialistic values against spiritual ones, barbarism versus civilisation. Like Lanfranchino some seventy years later, Alberti wanted above all to attack

the insolence and pretensions of the nouveaux riches. Unlike Lanfranchino however, Alberti had not broached this theme from the angle of the querelle and he need not at all have introduced an echo of the querelle into his discussion. He soon realized in fact that it was quite out of place in the context of his argument, but talking of social competition and disrespect for men-of-letters he too, like Giovanni d'Arezzo, must have felt that it was a good opportunity to contribute his own opinion to a topical debate. At the time of writing the De commodis Alberti might still have been in Bologna, and if he was not, he had only just left that city. The querelle of Knights and Doctors was a regular subject for discussion there, amongst the lawyers of the university. This could explain why Alberti, who was only a fledgling writer and probably keen therefore to advertise his knowledge, should have wanted to mention the querelle and why, having done so, he should then have cast it aside, when he came to consider the realities of the Florentine environment about which he was writing.

It was against this same Florentine background, and only a few years later, that one of Alberti's friends, who was also a friend of Flavio Biondo, Lapo da Castiglionchio the younger, wrote an entire work inspired by the querelle of Knights and Doctors, which he entitled Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia literarum. Lapo was not a lawyer and his arguments in the Comparatio are not at all the usual arguments of the querelle. Indeed his terminology belongs to a totally different world from the traditional world of Roman lawyers. Yet it was to their very tradition as we shall be seeing, that Lapo himself assigned the Comparatio. If it ended up as something quite different, it is because, as we have already noted, when released from its bonds with the body of the law, the genre naturally tended to undergo a transformation.

C. Lapo da Castiglionchio: Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia literarum.

Lapo da Castiglionchio was by no means a prominent figure in his own time and he cannot rank as a great writer; nonetheless he has been the object of considerable attention by scholars. His life was sketched out by Vespasiano da Bisticci and more recently in a somewhat superficial "profile" by Lauro Martines; he receives a mention in Tiraboschi; a work of his, the Dialogus de curiae commodis, was edited by Garin in 1952; and the latest volume of the Dizionario biografico degli italiani devotes five pages to him.[16] Most of what we know about him is derived from his own epistolario, in which not all the letters are dated and many contain vague allusions instead of specific statements. There have been two studies of the epistolario, one in 1899 by Francesco Paolo Luiso, the other an unpublished tesi di laurea of 1971 by E. Rotondi which provides the basis for Riccardo Fubini's article in the DBI.[17] Luiso worked from the five manuscripts known to him (four in Italy and one in France), containing 37 letters in all, whereas Rotondi was able to consult a newly discovered manuscript from Como, which contains a total of 75 letters.[18] Despite this discovery there are still many uncertainties about Lapo's biography and one significant one as far as we are concerned: the circumstances and date of composition of the Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia literarum are unknown.

Lapo came from a long dispossessed family of the Florentine feudal nobility, originally from the Valdisieve. His grandfather, Petrarch's friend Lapo the elder, who was a famous lawyer and played an important part in the city's administration, regenerated through his learning the waning nobility of his family. This at least is what he taught his children to believe, the eldest of whom, Bernardo, wrote admiringly to him - and in terms taken straight from the Knight and Doctor querelle: "sete

adunque, Padre, cavaliere, essendo avvocato; sete Conte, avendo letto venti anni".[19] Lapo the elder's success was short-lived however. During the revolt of the Ciompi his house was burnt down, and he sent into exile. Thereafter the family fortunes were never quite the same again.

Lapo the younger was born in 1405 or 1406, and died in 1438 of the plague, in Venice. Vespasiano da Bisticci describes him as a melancholy character little prone to laughter ("era di mediocre istatura, malinconico, di natura che rade volte rideva, se non per forza"), and indeed his short life did not afford him much cause to rejoice. He was poor, in constant search of employment, and repeatedly seeing his hopes dashed or his expectations disappointed. He was a self-acknowledged victim of the "Roman dream", who had believed that to a man-of-letters like himself all avenues would be open as they had been to his Roman forbears. When the dream turned sour, as it did again and again, letters would turn bitter. Towards the end of 1436, for instance, he wrote to his friend Leonardo Bruni:

haec nostra studia, quae semper coluissem et in quibus bonam aetatis meae partem versatus essem, et a quibus omnia praesidia ornamenta decus dignitatem quietem denique petenda esse statuissem, odisse iam coeperim. Etenim quamquam ab initio nulla honoris et gloriae cupiditate, sed tantum voluntate et delectatione adductus et spe quadam excolendae vitae, contemptis abiectisque ceteris rebus onmibus, me ad harum ingenuarum et humanarum artium studia contulissem; attamen paulo in his provectus, cum et legissem saepissime et audissem quanto ea in honore apud maiores extitissent, quanta et quam amplissima praemia splendorem dignitatem a clarissimis eius aetatis principibus earum studiosi homines assequi consuessent, non immutata quidem priori sententia sed mehercule labefactata parumper, ad ea ipsa sic animum intendere coepi, non ut prae illis honestatem abiiciendam putarem, sed cum illis coniunctam appetere. Itaque veterum exemplis propositis, horum temporum horum hominum horum morum, totius denique rationis ignarus, fore existimabam ut, cum his litteris non dico imbutus et ornatus sed leviter tinctus prodirem, ad omnes vel amplissimos honores et dignitatis gradus facilis pateret aditus; nec eos petendos esse aut desiderandos, sed ultro vel invito recusanti deferendos esse. Hac spe et cogitatione ubi iam tantum profecisse visus sum, quantum ab homine non omnino otioso ad usum vitae ac dignitatem afferendum esset, temptare

institui et ad eum, quem ipse proposueram, cursum incumbere. In quo longe aliter evenit atque eram opinatus. Incidimus enim in ea tempora, in quibus nullus non modo rectis studiis bonis[que] artibus honos propositus, sed nec virtuti quidem et probitati locus relictus esse videatur; ut qui sperassem, me omnia sine ullo labore etiam facile adepturum, idem iam annum aut eo amplius huic rei toto [animo] atque omnibus ut ita dixerim nervis intentus, nullis laboribus nullis vigiliis nec per me nec per amicos quicquam assequi potuerim. Neminem enim ex iis principibus reperi, non qui me praemio peteret, nam id iam antea desperaram, sed qui gratis orantem id atque obsecrantem tecto tantum ac victu dignum duceret. 20

The disillusion could be dispelled by renewed hopes of employment, but Lapo's ambitions were never fulfilled, largely through want of the right connections, often because of unfortunate circumstances. After an early spell in a bank at Bologna, which belonged to relatives of his friend Leon Battista Alberti (at whose behest Lapo began a serious study of Latin and Greek), and after several years as a student of Filelfo's, in Bologna Florence and Siena, Lapo first set his gaze upon a position in the Curia, which was then in Florence. For a few months he managed to hang on to two cardinals, but the first one died and the second followed the Pope to Bologna leaving Lapo behind in Florence. Next Lapo aspired to succeed Filelfo in his chair at the University of Siena, upon the latter's departure for France, but with the death in June 1436 of the Cardinal of Santo Sisto, through whose influence Lapo had expected to secure the position, those hopes too were dashed. On the 24th of June Lapo wrote a bitter letter to a friend of his in Bologna, Angelo da Recanati, telling him that he had given up all hope of ever finding a job in Florence or at the Curia.[21] Angelo invited him to Bologna and Lapo went there with the expectation of starting a new life. By September however he was still unemployed and was casting his gaze as far afield as the Council in Basle. Finally, in November of the same year, his dreams seemed at last to have come true. Thanks to the intervention of yet another mighty ecclesiastic, he was appointed to a lectureship at the University. On November the 2nd he delivered his inaugural lecture, full of hope and optimism, "de studiorum commodis

et utilitatibus": "quis erit igitur aut tam stultus, tam arrogans aut tam sui despiciens, tam desidiosus, tam iners, qui non sibi ad eas artes omni studio, opera, labore incumbendum esse existimet, in quibus virtutes, opes, honores, dignitates plurimae ac maximae continentur, cum praesertim, etiamsi nihil afferre huiusmodi possent, suo tamen decore atque specie quaerendae nobis atque excolendae forent?" [22] But three days later, for reasons of ill-health, Lapo was forced to relinquish his appointment. Thereafter he hovered from menial task to menial task. For about eleven months he was tutor to the nephews and administrator of the household of yet another papal official. Towards the end of 1437, and thanks to the intercession of his friends Leonardo Bruni and Flavio Biondo, he entered the household of the Cardinal Chamberlain, Francesco Condulmier, nephew of Eugenius IV. This too was a disappointment, mostly because of Condulmier's hostile attitude towards Lapo; but Lapo stuck it out willy-nilly for almost a year. When the Council moved to Ferrara, Lapo went along and found himself a "prisoner" of the papal palace, with lots of work and no pay. In September 1438, having completed his De curiae commodis, he dedicated it to Francesco Condulmier, and shortly thereafter left the Curia for good. One month later he was struck by the plague and died in Venice.

Lapo's constant quest for employment is echoed in the dedications of his works, all of which are addressed to persons of power and influence (especially within the ambit of the Curia) and each one of which is a disguised job application. His main activity was as a translator, in particular of Plutarch's Lives, but he is also the author of some original works: the epistolario, the Bologna inaugural lecture, the De curiae commodis and the Comparatio inter rem militarem et studia literarum.[23] The Comparatio survives today in six manuscripts, three of which are in Italy (in the Riccardiana, the Marciana and at Rimini) and three in England (at Cambridge, the Bodleian

and Lambeth Palace).[24] The Riccardiana and the Marciana manuscripts bear a dedication to Gregorio Correr, the one in Rimini to Eugenius IV and the three English ones are dedicated to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. As the text itself is undated and provides no information to speak of on the circumstances of its composition, these dedications may provide us with some clues as to when it was written. It was most certainly not written for Eugenius IV. The Rimini manuscript is a copy of one dedicated to Gregorio Correr: the copyist remembered to substitute a "clementissime Pater" for the "eruditissime Gregori" of the first line, but he then forgot to make the appropriate substitutions and even the long passage of the introduction praising the qualities and virtues of Correr is left untouched and is nowhere replaced by the equivalent for the the Pope (no wonder Lapo failed to deserve the patronage of Eugenius).[25] In the English manuscripts on the other hand, instead of every apostrophe to Correr there is one to Humphrey, and it is Humphrey's praises which are sung in the introduction and not Correr's. The fact that the Rimini manuscript is copied from one dedicated to Correr but has significant variants from both the Riccardiana and Marciana manuscripts, and the fact that an autograph or original is missing, could induce one to surmize that it was this original from which the Rimini manuscript was copied and that the work was therefore initially intended for Correr. This supposition can be confirmed from other sources.

Gregorio Correr, whom Lapo considered at one time to be his best friend, was another of his unlucky connections.[26] He came from a noble Venetian family, was educated in Mantua by Vittorino da Feltre (he was later to write a small treatise on education inspired by Vittorino's ideals) and he took holy orders in 1431, when his father's cousin was elected pope and appointed him apostolic protonotary. In 1433 he went to the Council of Basle, where he chose to side with the conciliarists against

the papal party, a rash move which, upon his return to Italy, effectively debarred him from further advancement in the Curia despite his family ties with the Pope. This move also meant that he was unable to be of any assistance to Lapo, when the latter sought his help in finding a position at the Curia. He died in Verona in 1464, prior of San Zenone and having recently been elected Patriarch of Venice but prevented from entering into possession of his see by long wranglings with the then Pope, Paul II.[27]
The correspondence between Correr and Lapo consists of three letters: one from Lapo in Florence to Correr in Bologna dated May 4th 1436, Correr's reply from Bologna dated July 1st 1436 and a final reply from Lapo dated July 7th 1436.[28] In this last letter Lapo tells Correr not to write to him any longer, as he will soon be in Bologna himself. A couple of weeks later Lapo did indeed go to Bologna, and thereafter we must assume that the two friends were in close contact, if of course Gregorio remained in Bologna (we are even less informed about his movements than we are about Lapo's) and if their friendship had not cooled off (Gregorio's letter to Lapo is rather curt). In his letter of May 4th Lapo had informed Correr that he was about to dedicate some special work to him: "cum primum Romuli vitam interpretatus fuero, quae propediem nisi quid aliud accidat absolvetur, aliquid tuo nomine edam, quod et tibi iucundum et mihi etiam honorificum sit." [29] There are three works of Lapo's dedicated to Correr: translations of Lucian's De longaevis and Patriae laudatio and the Comparatio. Luiso, who knew of the existence of the Comparatio and of its dedication to Correr but dismissed it in a mere footnote,[30] took this sentence of Lapo's letter as referring to the translations from Lucian (which he therefore dated to before May 1436). It would seem more likely however that the sentence is a reference to the Comparatio, since Lapo mentions the work as something special, which will bring both pleasure to Correr and honour to himself. Lapo had already produced quite a number of translations and he would hardly have viewed another one as particularly

exceptional and capable of throwing the spotlight on to its author. He must have had something new and original in mind, something which would single him out as an author in his own right. This can only have been the Comparatio, of which, in the dedication to Correr, he says once again that this is a work which should be particularly close to Correr's heart: "ego vero nunc, si quid ad te de iis rebus, que tu tibi studio ac diligentia comparasti, scriptum perlatum sit, opinor non invite te esse lecturum" (p.65v°).[31] What this does not tell us of course is whether, in May 1436, Lapo was just thinking about writing the Comparatio or whether he had already started to work on it. He could not have completed it yet, for the wording of the letter suggests that there was still work to do. Again the text itself offers little assistance. In the introduction Lapo talks of "gravissimos nostre civitatis casus" and "multa ac varia domestice rei incommoda" (p.65r°), which Riccardo Fubini understands as a reference to Cosimo de Medici's coming to power.[32] This could give us a terminus post quem of October 1434, if these words did not appear in the introduction and had therefore possibly been added after the work itself had been written. In the last resort it is probably the mood of the Comparatio which is our safest guide to dating it. It is a mood of faith and optimism, faith in the rejuvenating power of letters, optimism for a better world to be. There would appear to have been only two periods in Lapo's life when he displayed such confidence: early in 1434, when he made his literary début, and towards the end of 1436, when he had been appointed to the lectureship in Bologna. The optimism of the latter period is reflected in the inaugural lecture and of the earlier period in a letter to Simone Lamberti.[33] The subject of the letter is very similar to that of the Comparatio. Lapo wrote it to encourage the young Simone to stay firm in his resolve to abandon the career of arms, regardless of what his bigoted detractors might say, and to devote his time to studying and learning. It may be therefore that Lapo conceived of

the Comparatio and even began to write it in the immediate wake of his letter to Lamberti, and that he took it up again and completed it in Bologna during the second half of 1436, and dedicated it to Correr in the course of those months during which the two young men were still in contact.[34] In the following year, as Lapo had not been able to get anything out of Correr and was once again on the look-out for employment, he re-dedicated the Comparatio to Humphrey of Gloucester and dispatched it to him in England. Zenone da Castiglione it was, Bishop of Bayeux and one of Henry VI's envoys to the Council of Basle, who had sung the praises of Humphrey's generous patronage to Lapo. He had recently arrived in Bologna from Basle and met Lapo in the corridors of the Curia.[35] Together with the Comparatio Lapo sent Humphrey his re-dedicated translations of three orations by Isocrates, and later that year he was still to send him a translation of Plutarch's Life of Artaxerxes.[36] But again Lapo had picked an unlucky number. No word came back from Humphrey.

Humphrey may well have been a man of learning and a patron of the arts, but he was also a professional soldier and he had probably been offended by Lapo's defamation, in the Comparatio, of the art of war. By its title the work purports to be a "comparison" of arms and letters, but it is far from being an objective assessment of the two callings. Lapo lays bare his sympathies, not to say prejudices, in the very opening paragraphs, and after that the Comparatio turns into an enthusiastic panegyric of letters and a strong indictment of arms. Having commented on the difficulty of his appointed task, since great advantages have accrued to mankind from both arms and letters, and apologizing for the seeming arrogance of debating a matter in which he is no expert, Lapo proceeds to justify himself:

verumtamen non ingenio fretus nec arrogantia aliqua aut temeritate hoc sum adductus ut facerem. Sed cum mihi a puero ii sapientissimi viri idemque facile beatissimi semper visi essent qui, nature ac doctrine presidiis ornati,

cum se non modo a bellicis rebus verum etiam a negociis publicis et ab omni ambitione ac contentione civili removissent, in hoc studiosorum optimo ac quietissimo ac saluberrimo vite statu omne suum studium atque ocium collocarent exercendi ingenii gratia, suscipiendam mihi causam horum studiorum ac defendendam putavi. 37

To indict the art of war (as practised in his own day and age) had also been Lapo's main purpose in the letter to Lamberti where, after a lengthy introduction in praise of Lamberti's outstanding qualities, in particular his intelligence and exceptional memory, Lapo launches into a bitter attack on the degeneracy corruption and effeminacy of contemporary soldiers:

illa scilicet disciplina sanctissima, et incorruptissima, illa propugnatrix libertatis, illa expultrix tyrannorum, illa conservatrix salutis, vindex scelerum, patrona civitatum e medio se removit, nec cum his hominibus ullum sibi statuit esse commercium. Eius autem comites, et ministrae virtutes pariter cesserunt, eamque consequutae sunt. Itaque non immerito his, qui nunc in hac rei militaris umbra versantur, nulla religio est, nulla sanctitatis, nulla divinarum rerum cura, nulla pietas, nulla observatio dignitatis; sed contra summa impietas, plurimae superstitiones, maxima contumacia, intolerabilis arrogantia: nulla fides sancta, nulla inviolata foedera, nulla ratio aequitatis conservandae. Omnia pretio exaequant, omnia sua libidine metiuntur, omnia denique iura et divina, et humana pervertunt. Hos non matrimonii sanctitas, non legitimi liberi delectant: quin et illud iam sanctissimum castrorum nomen abutuntur, quod a castitate ductum putatur. 38

"Where are the great captains of the past?" laments Lapo, and to a host of Greek and Roman military commanders he confronts the military commanders of his own day, who by comparison cut a despicable figure. Many of the ancient captains also retired from the profession of arms to a quiet life of learning, and Lamberti would only be imitating their example. What is more many cultivated both arms and letters, and why should Lamberti not do the same, now leaving arms for letters and later returning to arms? This combination is a tried educational method, which both Greeks and Romans used to remarkable effect. And would that it be applied once again, so that modern men could measure up to the "orators" of old: "si igitur illis viris ea res laudi tradita est, quum pari in honore, aut etiam maiore res militaris, et studia doctrinae versabantur;

cur non idem tibi concedendum putem, hoc praesertim tempore, quo post interitum veteris illius, singularisque doctrinae haec studia a nostris hominibus summa cum laude revocata, atque adeo exculta sunt, ut non desperem fore quin perbrevi Oratores optimos habemus." [39] After further encouragements and exhortations, Lapo ends his letter by dangling before Lamberti's eyes the rewards he may expect to reap from his endeavours in the field of learning: "hinc enim opes maximas, hinc honestissimas divitias, hinc plurimas amicitias, hinc honores amplissimos, hinc decus, et dignitatem sumus habituri." [40] All of these things, of which Lapo himself dreamt and for which he himself craved but which never came his way, were never to be enjoyed by Simone either, who was cut down in the flower of youth.

The admiration for earnest scholars above the fray of worldly existence with which Lapo prefaces his Comparatio would seem to clash with the rather utilitarian conclusion of the letter to Lamberti, and there is no doubt that in the Comparatio a shift of emphasis has taken place. Arms have ceased to be commendable and Lapo no longer advocates the classical model of education: arms and letters are now decidedly pitted against one another. Yet Lapo's basic premise has remained the same - excitement at the dawning of a new age and at the infinite possibilities it will offer ("hec nostra studia, que quasi ex baratro quodam in luce revocata 'paululum' respirare ceperunt") [41] - and the Comparatio is far from being a simple eulogy of the contemplative life. Rather, it is a defence of the forces of light against the forces of darkness, of Life against Death.

The Comparatio is longer than any of the texts we have studied so far, but much of it is repetitive, a simple display of the author's erudition: whenever he can, Lapo will always give ten examples taken from classical antiquity instead of one. It is divided into four uneven parts, which correspond to the four angles from which Lapo approaches the problem: the origin ("ortus") of arms and

letters, their utility ("utilitas"), the praises ("laus") they engender and the pleasure ("iucunditas") they give. Despite this methodical approach all four sections resemble one another, and in this study we shall proceed as though the work were one. Arms and letters have so far been used as convenient shorthand, but they are not in fact the terms which Lapo himself uses. The comparison is between "rem militarem et studia literarum". The author never actually defines these terms and in their vagueness they tend to be quite all-embracing. The res militaris is that which pertains to warfare and the art of war, studia all that pertains to learning.

At the very beginning of his essay Lapo acknowledges the positive and even beneficial aspects of warfare: "cum nostri temporis res gestas mihi ante oculos pono, animadverto non parum commodi ac emolumenti rem militarem 'tum' privatis hominibus tum civitatibus attulisse. Et cum vetustiora illa atque illustriora maiorum facta mente ac cogitatione repeto, invenio a re militari sepe acerbissimos ac immanissimos hostes profligatos, patrie salutem, incolumitatem civium conservatam, crudelissima bella restincta, permultas 'edificatas' urbes, clarissimas res publicas, florentissima imperia constituta." [42] This is soon followed however by the observation that the uses of warfare are limited (to times of danger and conflict) and that in any case the advantages of the res militaris are insignificant compared with the harm it does: "ea ipsa que in ea insunt commoda, si quis cum 'damnis' detrimentisque comparare conferreque velit, inveniet ea ne 'minimam' quidem malorum partem adequare." [43] From then on only the negative aspect of warfare is mentioned. Lapo will find no more good words to speak in its favour. Even what in the letter to Lamberti had been to the credit of ancient captains - the dangers they faced so bravely - is now turned against them, to show how perfidious their fate and vulnerable their existence was, which unrolled amidst blood death and destruction. The reality is now exclusively that which in the letter to

Lamberti had applied only to contemporary soldiers: "inter nequissimos ac inquinatissimos homines vivendum est, 'in' latronum parricidarum homicidarumque ac, quod fedissimum est , lenonum aleatorum cetu ac turba, ubi non sanctitas, non religio, non honestas, non fides, non gravitas, non denique sermo pudicus versetur." [44] Arms are seen as the tools of fallen angels, warfare as human, not divine, and worse still, of the beastly part of human nature, the body. Anyone who boasts of strength, glories in brute force and in qualities which are better developed in animals than they are in men: "quanto igitur animus corpori dignitate prestat, tanto eius opera illis 'preferenda sunt'. Ea enim non proprie sunt hominis prestantie, sed sunt communia nobis cum belluis, interdumque multo melius ab illis explicantur quam a nobis." [45] And just as the practice of warfare is unworthy of man, so too are the origins of the art of war ignominious (these are the words which must have been particularly pleasing to the ears of Humphrey of Gloucester). The first soldiers were highway-robbers, covetous of their neighbours' goods and too lazy to earn a living. When they took to organizing themselves into bands, they so terrorized the population, that people had to shelter behind walls and ramparts, thus giving birth to the first cities. It was not long before these cities began to contend amongst themselves for property and territory, but having no experience in fighting they were forced to hire the services of their former enemies. The erstwhile bandits were now regular soldiers, and they bequeathed to their profession the customs and practices of their earlier days, "quorum ars aucta atque inveterata res militaris 'est appellata'." [46] The art of war is thus the child of crime and cupidity. It is greed which always drew and still draws men to warfare, and all the suffering which men have ever had to endure was thrust upon them by men-of-arms: "quecumque mala incommoda excidia detrimenta bella clades post hominum memoriam evenerunt, ea fere omnia merito rei militari accepta referemus." [47] Not everyone, Lapo recognizes, is likely to be convinced by his theory on the origins of

soldiery, but there is one thing of which he at least is irremovably convinced, and that is that the res militaris is not the product of violence but its cause. It is not the liberator, but the oppressor of mankind: "non enim totiens ab ea servata libertas est quam erepta." [48] Even the Romans, who otherwise rank so highly in Lapo's mind, are accused by him of having abused the res militaris in order to subjugate the world to their rapacity: "hac freti Romani omnes gentes ac nationes vexarunt, hac totum terrarum orbem sue parere libidini coegerunt." [49] The res militaris is thus something perverse un-natural and impure. It is impure because it is not all of one kind, engendering as it does both joy and grief, joy to the victors and grief to the losers. What is more monstr/ous still however is that it can cause grief and joy at the same time to one and the same person. The Thebans rejoiced at their defeat of the Lacedemonians, but their joy was mingled with sorrow for the death of Epaminondas. "Sic in re militari nulla unquam dies omni ex parte leta, nullum integrum aut diuturnum gaudium, nulla expers doloris voluptas; 'omnia' miscet, omnia confundit; res insuper nemini salutaris, pernitiosa omnibus, victis victoribusque luctuosa." [50] The res militaris moreover is the plaything of fortune. The outcome of war is always uncertain, and the fame of generals only lasts as long as it happens to be talked about. Indeed, if it were not for the succour of writers, great feats of arms would never be known to have taken place: "qui enim res geste maiorum 'a' memoria nostra propter vetustatem remote in hanc etatem servari incorrupte potuissent, nisi eas eloquentissimi scriptores suis monumentis illustrassent?" [51] Arms without letters in other words are imperfect. There is proof of this in the fact that no great captain of old ever felt he could be proficient in his duties, if to a mastery of arms he did not also add a thorough education. This point, which in the letter to Lamberti serves to highlight the degeneracy into which contemporary soldiers have lapsed, in the Comparatio simply becomes a confirmation of the inferiority of the res militaris. So too does the example

of the many generals who abandoned the career of arms for a life of study, all the more so (Lapo now adds) since history does not tell of anyone who ever followed the path in the opposite direction. And to those who might contend that to enjoy a life of leisured study men-of-learning need the protection of men-of-arms, Lapo retorts that servants were never deemed to be more noble than their masters.

If the res militaris is unnatural, knowledge ("studia" and "doctrinae") [52] is very Nature itself, simple pure and perfect. Creation and being are both an expression of knowledge. Nothing can exist if it is not known and nothing can be if it does not know. "Cognosco ergo sum" is what Lapo might have said in reply to Descartes's "cogito ergo sum". In the beginning there was the Word, which conceived everything into being, and it is the power of the Word which sustains creation:

inveniemus in ipsa mundi origine, cum omnia procreata sunt, opus scientie permaximum fuisse, rei militaris nullum, cum elementa ante confusa et permixta 'secreta' sunt eisque certa quedam et 'definita' regio attributa est, cuius terminis septa 'tenerentur'. Ex illis vero herbe ac plante fereque ac pecudes ac homines ipsi generati sunt. Itaque deinceps perpetuo quodam nature cursu fieri statutum, 'tum' celum ipsum hac qua videmus forma rotunda fabricatum 'est', sideraque ei affixa, motusque proprii ortus ac obitus singulis distributi, tum varietates vicissitudinesque temporum statute. Que omnia non sine maxima cognitione ac scientia nec 'creari' ab initio nec postea conservari potuissent. 53

For every living creature the first act is an act of perception and this, sensory though it may be, is a form of knowledge. Animals therefore and infants too, as the first manifestation of their existence, cognize the world ("in ipsis brutis quanta cognitio apparet"; "num enim ea parva sunt cognitionis signa ac inditia, que ipsi sensus 'in' pueris pre se ferunt?"). [54] For man too and for man above all existence is knowledge, but it is knowledge of a superior order, for through his intelligence, through studia and doctrinae he partakes of the divine: "que animis hominum nature ipsa concessit, ea 'removit a ceteris' tantumque nos voluit 'participare cum deo'." [55]

In the image of God man is a creator - the works ("opera") of God are reflected in the arts ("artes") of men - and man's tool is his knowledge: "eum igitur ipsum, qui primus res singulas 'novit' eisque pro uniuscuiusque natura nomen 'indidit', quis dixerit non infinitam quamdam ac immensam peritiam tenuisse?" [56] Naming is knowing, knowing is understanding and to understand is to control. Man is in a position to control his existence and his environment precisely because he is capable of understanding them. Knowledge means control of self (self-knowledge is self-control) and of others. To control others, man's specific instrument is oratory (Lapo views man truly as homo sapiens, but at his best as homo rhetoricus). The orator is not of course a word-spinning pulpit-thumper, but Cicero's and Quintilian's good man who gives perfect enunciation to what he knows well and has clearly grasped. There is a long and fervent passage in the Comparatio on the powers and benefits of oratory, which reaches an excited climax in the proclamation that the word is mightier than the sword: "hec omnia denique oratio conficit, que hostile ferrum conficere non potest." [57] The word (spoken and written) is the cause of all that is good and just. It is the bestower of civilization and the guardian of society:

his [i.e. doctrinarum studiis] enim exculti atque ornati homines primum ac ipsi recte vivendi rationem assecuti sunt ac ceteros idem facere docuerunt. Idem genus hominum in agris ac montibus vagum atque dispersum ac passim ferino more ex radicibus atque ex bacis silvestribus victum queritans in unum coegerunt; ii a fera agrestique vita ad humanum cultum civilemque traduxerunt; idem in urbibus collocarunt. Ab iis divini cultus religio, ab iis sacrificiorum ritus ac observantia, ab iis cerimonie sacrorum phanorum reperte, ab iis coniungiorum ac nuptiarum sanctimonia, ab iis liberorum educatio eorumdemque ingenua eruditio, ab iis amicitie comparande colende retinendeque ratio profecta. Ex eodem quoque fonte equabilis iuris utilitatem exhausimus atque expressimus, ex eodem domestice rei conservande regende amplificande precepta. Ex eodem prudentiam , iustitiam, fortitudinem, modestiam, temperantiam, magnificentiam, liberalitatem, beneficentiam, mansuetudinem, clementiam profectam inveniemus. A quibus docemur preterita meminisse, 'uti presentibus', futuris prospicere, suum cuique reddere, ab alienis mentes oculos 'manus' abstinere, pericula pro honestate subire, vulnera excipere, mortem servituti preferre, concitatos animi

motus ac supra modum 'se' efferentes continere, voluptatum appetitus sedare, alta ac excelsa ac splendida spectare, humilia abiecta depressaque aspernari, in viros bonos ac dignos nobisque 'coniunctos' beneficos 'ac liberales' esse, bene meritis ac bene merentibus gratiam referre. Quid rei publice administrande, quid rei militaris (de qua plura dixi), quid belli gerendi disciplinam nobis ab iisdem traditam proferam? Quid legum ac iudiciorum descriptionem commemorem, qua nescio an ulla res utilior aut preclarior aut magis salutaris hominum societati potuerit inveniri, que bonos viros ac rei publice utilitati ac commodis consulentes premiis honoribus laudibus splendore dignitate prosequuntur, improbos ac seditiosos cives 'damnis' ignominiis suppliciis morte afficiunt. 58

Anything which brings about such wonders must undoubtedly be man's most precious gift, and indeed Lapo calls it "hoc maximum ac absolutissimum vel potius solum bonum". To those who possess it, it brings "verissimam ac plenissimam beatitudinem". [59] The expression may be other-worldly, but its meaning is of this world. The studia which Lapo has in mind are exclusively studia humanitatis (theology and the Holy Scriptures, for instance, do not enter into his scheme, and "metaphysics" play but a small part) and the contentment they engender is to be enjoyed here below. It is closer to the voluptas of the Epicureans than to the beatitude of the Christians: "in studiis cognitionis ipsius voluptas". [60] To seek out this happiness all sacrifices are justified, even abandoning family home and riches, for he who possesses it needs nothing else; he is sufficient unto himself, above the vicissitudes of life, beyond the sway of fortune. This is the port of life, to which all aspire, but which can only be reached over the calm sea of learning: "omnibus qui civilem vitam vivunt idem propositum [est], in ocio libere ac cum dignitate versari; studiosi 'quidem' homines hoc ipsum iam consecuti sunt, quasi in portum aliquem vite delati." [61] This ocium is a state without travail, a state of even peace and quiet. But it is not a life of isolated contemplation with one's gaze fixed on the here-after, and the Comparatio is not, as was already mentioned, a straightforward defence of the contemplative against the active life. Ocium, it is true, is the goal towards which everyone should strive, but it is an ocium with a dynamic quality about it. It is a power-store from

which energies are released for the improvement of men, the creative and life-giving energies of the logos: "cum autem illa legimus, que 'maiores nostri' de natura rerum, de bonis rebus ac malis, de sedandis cupiditatibus componendisque hominum moribus scripta nobis reliquerunt, quibus apparet eos omne suum ocium ad nostram utilitatem contulisse, quibus laudibus efferimus, quibus studiis 'prosequimur', qua benivolentia amplexamur." [62] Lapo owes his entire admiration and affection to these men, not to bloodthirsty men-of-war who dispense but death and destruction.

We have come a long way from knights and doctors contending for precedence. It is as though we were in a totally different world, and to a certain extent we are. We are no longer in the traditional world of jurists and their plurisecular heritage of Roman law drawn from the Corpus iuris and handed down from generation to generation in almost unchanging terms. Lapo does not once quote from this tradition or use actual terminology reminiscent of the querelle. His is the world of poetarum libri , of historie , of exemplorum vetustas , [63] the world of the new learning which gave its name to the Renaissance and whose rebirth he so jubilantly proclaims. He is the friend, as we have seen, of Leonardo Bruni, Leon Battista Alberti and Flavio Biondo, and his Comparatio has more in common, by its tenor, with Biondo's Borsus than it has with any of the other texts we have studied so far. [64] Yet, just as the Borsus was conceived in the perspective of the querelle, with Biondo avowedly assigning it to that tradition whilst offering a new interpretation of it , so too can the Comparatio be seen as belonging to the same genre, although, it is true, this may not be immediately perceptible. If, as is likely, the Comparatio owed its inception to the letter to Simone Lamberti and the controversy which lay behind it (the letter, as well as an encouragement to Simone, is a reply to his many critics in Florence, "ineptissimi homines" who, had he given up the career of arms for "mercaturam ... agriculturam ...

venationem, aut ... alium quemvis illiberalem, et sordidum quaestum", [65] would not have been so ready to disapprove of his decision), then it was born against a bachground similar not only to that of Alberti's De commodis but also to the background of much of the querelle over the centuries, a background of contests for precedence and social prestige, which may seem petty to the modern onlooker, but were no doubt crucial to those who were involved in them, based as they were on the latters' valuation of their own worth and usefulness to society. And that is precisely what the Comparatio is about. Lapo may well approach his subject from the ostensibly different points of view of ortus utilitas laus and iucunditas, and he may well dwell at some length on the more selfish advantages and enjoyments to be derived from studying and learning, but the basic gauge of his comparison is utilitas: who contributes most and who therefore is most to be honoured by society. There is no doubt in Lapo's mind that neither men-of-means nor men-of-war can in any way measure up, in this respect, to men-of-letters. The particular function of men-of-letters is to teach other men to distinguish between right and wrong, i.e. between just and unjust, good and bad, natural and un-natural (these constitute the two poles of Lapo's own reasoning in the Comparatio, in which he himself can be seen to be performing the appointed task of a man of letters, an orator). The expression of that discrimination within the context of society is the law, which is therefore, as we have already seen (above p.97), society's most precious commodity: "qua nescio an ulla res utilior aut preclarior aut magis salutaris hominum societati potuerit inveniri." Lawgivers therefore deserve more praise than generals: "quamvis enim Miltiadis et Themistoclis gloria illustris sit eorumque res geste iure laudentur, neuter tamen eorum cum Dracone aut Solone (mea quidem sententia) comparandus est, a quibus leges Atheniensium constitute sunt." [66] To be sure, we are a long way away from the actual terms of the querelle; but in a manner consonant with his own

approach and with his own "profession" Lapo is here addressing a problem not all that dissimilar from the one which Bolognini Beccadelli and Lanfranchino were to deal with in their own works. We come even closer to the terms of the querelle in a passage of the last section of the Comparatio (the section on iucunditas), in which Lapo is quite clearly taking issue with other participants in a topical debate. He is arguing that the joys of learning are greater than the joys of warring and that whoever possesses knowledge owns a store of happiness for times of peace and war, "ac in ocio ac in negocio". If anyone should claim, he then adds, that both in peace and in war men-of-learning depend on the protection of men-of-arms, he would reply that in that case men-of-learning would be using men-of-arms just as men-of-arms use weapons horses and the like; and nobody would ever pretend that these in themselves are more useful or praiseworthy than the men who wield and use them. But, he continues, what is the point of such arguments if in any case the subject is now iucunditas and not utilitas? And with a disenchanted conclusion, which runs counter to the entire thesis of his work, he shrugs off the obstinacy of militares homines by granting them what they want, just as Leonardo Bruni was to do in Giovanni d'Arezzo's De medicinae et legum praestantia (see above p.78) and Petronio Zagni in Beccadelli's Disputatione (see above p.19): "sed quid diutius huiusmodi argumenta conquiram, que ac supervacanea sunt in re 'perspicua' ac ad hunc locum non pertinent? Concedatur militares homines eruditis antecellere. Concedatur vitam salutem incolumitatem civium libertatemque rei publice quietem ac ocium civitatis eorum disciplina maxime contineri. Concedatur eosdem inter suos cives virtute utilitate dignitate principatum tenere." [67] There is no doubt that the question at stake here is precedence ("antecellere", "principatum tenere"), and this, one feels, is the reality (both social and literary) from which the letter to Simone Lamberti and then the Comparatio emanated, and against which Lapo constructed his defence of learning, to

convince himself just as much as others that all honours should be due, as they were in ancient days, to men-of-letters, a point he repeatedly makes in his correspondence too. Who exactly the adversaries of his men-of-letters were however, and whether his militares homines were actually knights, it is difficult to say. Etymologically they are kin to the milites of the querelle, but they seem more hardened in battle than many of the dubbed nouveaux riches we have come across so far. This could be because Lapo, like Biondo, was arguing sub specie antiquitatis, and in ancient days, as far as they both could tell, milites were well and truly what their name said they were and not intruders hiding behind a forged identity. But with his opening words Lapo quite firmly sets the Comparatio in the context of a well-established tradition: "diu inter doctissimos homines ac summis ingeniis preditos dubitari ac queri solitum est, eruditissime Gregori, disciplinane militaris an studia doctrine essent preferenda." He could of course have had ancient models in mind, of which there were a few (see below chapter V) but he never explicit/ly mentions them nor implicit/ly seems to be evoking them. It is more likely therefore that these words are a reference to the Knight and Doctor querelle, since it was the only such debate current at the time and with a long tradition too.[68] Lapo took his cue from it, but he gave to it his own, non-legalistic interpretation.

Despite his endeavours at publicizing the Comparatio as far and wide and high as possible, Lapo's interpretation of the querelle remained an isolated phenomenon. Neither his nor later Biondo's attempt to rejuvenate the terms of the debate had any lasting influence on the genre, no more than did Beccadelli's attempt to popularize it through the medium of Italian. Rejuvenation and popularization were brought to pass however, not many years after Biondo had written the Borsus and in the very same city, Ferrara, though from rather unexpected quarters perhaps: a commentary to Petrarch's Trionfi.

Chapter III

THE EARLY STAGES OF THE QUERELLE OF ARMS AND LETTERS

A. Bernardo Lapini da Montalcino, detto Ilicino: Commento sopra i Trionfi del Petrarca.

The Trionfi, which Petrarch began composing in the 1340's and which he was still retouching in the very year of his death, were, besides his Latin compositions, his most popular work during the Quattrocento, until their renown was eclipsed at the turn of the century by the Canzoniere.[1] In the fourth Triumph the poet attends a parade of famous men of the past. Lady Fame heads the parade and on her right-hand side she has Caesar and Scipio, followed by a host of valorous warriors:

> da man destra, ove gli occhi in prima porsi,
> la bella donna avea Cesare e Scipio;
> ma, qual più presso, a gran pena m'accorsi;
> l'un di Vertute e non d'Amor mancipio,
> l'altro d'entrambi. E poi mi fu mostrata,
> dopo sí glorioso e bel principio,
> gente di ferro e di valore armata.[2]

One by one Petrarch learns the names of all these heroes and their glorious deeds. The sight of them so enthralls him that he cannot detach his gaze from them until a voice bids him behold the other side of Lady Fame, where Plato and Aristotle lead a multitude of philosophers and other men of learning:

> io non sapea da tal vista levarme,
> quand'io udi': - Pon mente a l'altro lato;
> ché s'acquista ben pregio altro che d'arme. -
> Volsimi da man manca; e vidi Plato,
> che'n quella schiera andò più presso al segno
> al qual aggiunge cui dal cielo è dato;
> Aristotele poi, pien d'alto ingegno;
> Pitagora, che primo umilmente
> filosofia chiamò per nome degno.[3]

Again Petrarch is shown these famous men one by one. That they should be on the left of Fame and shown to him only after the men of arms is not a point out of which he chooses to make an issue. He may well have held, like a late sixteenth century commentator of his, that the right-

hand side was a position of greater dignity and honour ("luogo di più honore. Onde dice il padre al figliuolo 2. Salmo, 'sede à dextris meis'. Et nella credenza apostolica, 'sedet ad dexteram Dei patris omnipotentis'."),[4] but he certainly does not say so in so many words, and any suggestion that, by putting warriors before philosophers, he is establishing an order of priority and settling a question of precedence, cannot but come from a reader predisposed to understand the text in that way. Such an interpretation is precisely what we find in two of the earliest commentators of the Trionfi.

In the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence there is an anonymous fifteenth century manuscript of a patchy commentary to the Trionfi, which must be a copy of another (mostly illegible) manuscript, for its text is peppered with blank spaces. But rather than an actual commentary, this work could more properly be termed a compendium of highlights from the Trionfi, since it only comments certain passages and does not provide the full text of the poem but just the beginning of the relevant lines. It is entitled Brieve expositione et dichiaratione di alchune favole et ystorie delle quali si fa subcintamente mentione ne Triomphi del claro et laureato poeta fiorentino Messer Francescho Petrarcha. It is unfortunately totally anonymous, and attempts to identify its exact date and place of origin as well as its author have borne no fruits.[5] This is particularly unfortunate given the nature of the commentary to the beginning of the third chapter of the Triumph of Fame, into which the author not only introduces an echo of the Knight and Doctor querelle, but in which he makes remarks concerning a specific social context. The passage reads as follows:

io non sapea da tal vista. In questa tertia et ultima parte del quarto Triompho, della Fama, prosequendo il Petrarcha come la Fama trionfa contro alla Morte, si narrano et nominano molti huomini, i quali sono stati famosi per loro scientie liberali et de quali, doppo la morte loro, la fama è rimasta al mondo per le loro virtù et scientie, dimonstrando che non solamente gli huomini dopo la morte acquistono fama per li grandi facti d'arme et per virtù di

re militare, come è decto disopra nelle due parti del presente Trionfo, ma etiandio s'acquista fama delle scientie liberali, lequali sono sette, cioè Grammatica, Rethorica, Loyca, Musica, Astrologia, Arismetrica et Geometria. Avendo adunche il Petrarcha nelle due proxime precedenti parti del presente Trionfo della Fama come per virtù et grandi facti di arme et cose bellicose s'acquista doppo la morte al mondo grande fama, soggiungne hora questa presente tertia et ultima parte del quarto Trionfo, della Fama, nella quale fa mentione di molti huomini famosi per qualche scientia liberale. Et per questo si può notare, come l'arme vanno inançi alle scientie. Et cosí uno cavaliere per la militia debbe ire inançi a uno doctore per le scientie sue, il che oggidí veggiamo observarsi nelle parti nostre, peroché i militi et cavaliere sempre vanno inançi a doctori et altri scientiati huomini, il che etiandio dalle leggi è approvato. Et questo s'intende et nota, perché il Petrarcha nel presente Trionfo prima parla de gli huomini famosi in re militare et facti bellicosi, poi soggiungne et fa mentione di quelli, che sono stati famosi in scientie liberali (fols.124v° - 125r°).

Anyone reading this, who would not also have a text of the Trionfi before his eyes, may well be forgiven for thinking that Petrarch is confused and inconsistent and for getting a wrong impression of what the text is about. The commentator is clearly interpreting it on his own terms and using it for his own ends, by introducing notions which are alien to the intention and expression of the poem and by slowly twisting their meaning in order to bring them into line with a contemporary situation which has nothing whatsoever to do with Petrarch's original. Petrarch is talking of philosophers poets orators historians and the like, but his commentator is thinking in terms of the traditional liberal arts ("scientie liberali"), which he then generalizes as learning ("scientie") by dropping the liberali , and finally personalizes as the knowledge and profession of a particular man, the doctor (of law), by means of the possessive adjective ("le scientie sue"). He operates a similar transformation on Petrarch's warriors: from re militare , the synonym of facti d'arme , he draws militia (still understood in a general sense), whence he derives the knights of his own day ("militi et cavaliere"). Thus we find our well-known knights and doctors incongruously contending for precedence amidst a crowd of ancient famous men. It would seem as though the anonymous commentator,

whose conclusion ("et per questo si può notare") is entirely of his own making, is simply using Petrarch's poem as yet further evidence in the well-tried querelle of Knights and Doctors and as a further boost to the privileges of knights in his own city ("nelle parti nostre"). This is where more information about the manuscript would be so useful and is so unfortunately lacking. What are these "parti nostre" where knights have precedence over doctors and "altri scientiati huomini"? We are reminded of Alberti and Lapo, both of whom had suggested that it was not simply doctors of law but men of learning in general, litterati, who had to give way to knights. Might these parts therefore be Florence? And if they are, do the words "il che etiandio dalle leggi è approvato" refer to the actual laws of the city or simply to the laws adduced by the experts in the querelle? If the evidence itself is lacking to solve the mystery of this text, at least it may be used as evidence itself, to confirm the popularity of the Knight and Doctor querelle, which would appear to have surfaced wherever there was the slightest suggestion of contested precedence.

In this text however the querelle seems decidedly out of place. Petrarch's commentator seems to be uneasily toying with various similar though incompatible notions. Arms and letters, science and warfare would have been more appropriate to the context of the Trionfi, and he does actually use such expressions ("arme", "scientie"), but in the end he cannot prevent himself from reducing the argument to the traditional dimension of knights and doctors. It is as though he were trying to make a new departure from a rather stifled tradition, to expand the scope of the debate, but without managing to find the appropriate vocabulary. Where he failed though, Ilicino, another of Petrarch's commentators, succeeded. Taking his inspiration from the legal tradition, but employing different cultural and lexical tools from those of the jurists, Ilicino struck out on his own and in so doing he produced a new genre, the querelle of Arms and Letters, which became almost

immediately popular and which remained so for well over a century.

The son of a famous physician and himself a physician of some repute, Bernardo Lapini da Montalcino, otherwise known as Ilicino, was born around 1430. Little is known of his life.[6] It was spent in central and northern Italy with Siena, his home town, as its main pole of attraction. He held office there on several occasions and in 1460 was professor of medicine at the university. In August of that year he moved to Mantova to take up appointment as court doctor to the Gonzaga. He may also at one time have served in the same capacity at the court of the Sforza in Milan. In 1468-69 he held a chair at the University of Ferrara, where he established close links with Borso d'Este and his court and where, on February 1st 1469, he was knighted by the Emperor Frederick III, on the same occasion on which titles of nobility were conferred upon the father of Lodovico Ariosto.[7] There is no documentary evidence of his still being alive after 1474 but the date of his death is unknown.

Poet and prose writer [8] as well as practising physician and university professor, Ilicino owed his literary fame, which lasted well into the sixteenth century, to the monumental commentary which he wrote to the Trionfi some time between 1466 and 1471 and which he dedicated to Duke Borso.[9] It met with immediate success. There are seven extant manuscripts of it and it was published twenty-four times within the space of fifty years. The first edition was printed in Bologna in 1475 and the remainder mostly in Venice but also in Milan. With the exception of that first edition, Ilicino's commentary always appeared together with Francesco Filelfo's to Petrarch's Rime, written in the 1440s.[10] Unlike the anonymous "Florentine" commentary Ilicino's includes the whole text of the poem, though "drowns" may be the more correct expression, for it is like some medieval work of theological, philosophical

or juridical exegesis, with each page containing but a few lines of the actual text surrounded by a sea of annotations. The Trionfi merely serve as a pretext to the commentator's display of erudition. He is not interested in Petrarch's language or concerned about his style, but simply wants to draw from the poem as much as he may of the "admiranda doctrina" which, he says, lies concealed beneath the verses. He hardly seems to notice that the Trionfi are in fact a poem; he treats them as a cryptic encyclopaedia, every new word, every new personage calling forth a mass of information. Digressions are the rule rather than the exception, and as a result Ilicino's style becomes often laborious. One critic went so far as to say of it: "Messer Francesco aveva le sue buone ragioni di dir male dei medici, se dovevan rendergli, anche da morto, di siffatti servigi." [11] But readers of the time were obviously more lenient or more receptive. And they were certainly attentive readers, to notice, as many did, one of Ilicino's lengthiest digressions, tucked away at the very heart of the work, in the introduction to the third chapter of the Triumph of Fame: the first literary manifestation of the querelle of Arms and Letters. [12]

Ilicino's querelle of Arms and Letters was influenced by the querelle of Knights and Doctors, as we shall be seeing, and Ilicino no doubt saw himself as writing in that same tradition, but he brought to the debate new concepts and a new terminology. These he obtained from the cultural background which was specific to his own profession. A physician in those days was not the specialized technician he is nowadays. He received the broadest of educations, and a major component of his training was philosophical. He therefore often styled himself "physician and philosopher". [13] Ilicino, in the title of his commentary, is called "medicinae ac philosophiae discipulus" and in the chronicle which tells of his knighthood, "philosopho et phisico". He, like the other authors we shall be studying in the course of this

chapter, set at least as much store by the one title as by the other. Indeed it is true to say that they saw them as indivisible from one another, because medicine was a science which not so much derived from experience and experiments as it was deduced from philosophical first principles. This is a point on which Ilicino himself insists in his commentary, when he inveighs against the so-called physicians of his day, mere empiricists who do not, as they should, abide by the canons of medical science, but simply derive their knowledge (and what is worse, their reputation) from experimentation:

> a ragione deplora il poeta, ne nostri tempi l'arte di medicina essere guasta. Cunciosiacosaché tanta è la cupidità e avaritia de li medici che, tirati più dal guadagno che dalla scientia, pretermettano gli studii necesarii 'bonarum artium', senza dequali è totalmente medicina imperfecta ... Ma certamente molto magiore è la colpa e più con effecto conduce alla ruina sua lo errore de principi e delle altre republiche, equali non fanno distinctione né infra i periti medici e puri experimentatori, dequali lo effecto solo governa fortuna. Onde spesse volte più rendano di credito e premio ad uno simplice experimento provenuto per beneficio di natura regolante lo errore dello empirico, che a molti, equali cum ragione a pe' canoni sono stati operati da medici. Ladonde interviene che la necessaria diligentia di medicina si lassa e ciascuno corre a fare nothomia di corpi humani, per chiarire sé della virtù d'uno simplice. O come è perduto il debito e laudabile timore scripto da Ippocrate nel primo aforismo, quando dice: experimentum falax! [14]

Philosophy as taught in the fifteenth century at the traditional seats of learning, the universities, was still overridingly Aristotelian and it is not surprising therefore to find Aristotle as THE Authority throughout Ilicino's commentary. Il philosopho (iii,7-8)[15] is the ultimate arbiter of any sentence. When, in the second chapter of the Triumph of Death, Ilicino wants to prove the immortality of the soul, he invokes Aristotle first, then Averroes, and only at the very end, after four more pagan authors and two Old Testament figures, a single Christian authority, St. Augustine. [16] It is Aristotle too, towards the end of the commentary, who testifies to the infinity of God, [17] and in the querelle passage Aristotle is the author most frequently quoted. He admittedly has to share

this privilege with Cicero, but it is always Aristotle who adjudicates on the most important issues.[18] Moreover it is a world-view of predominantly Aristotelian persuasion which constitutes the foundation on which the querelle is constructed.

Nothing new, and certainly familiar to readers of Dante and other medievalists, this world-view posits that every creature according to its nature (iii,16-19) seeks its perfection (i,13+ii,15-17). In other words it has a goal, an end (iii,19) which it aims to achieve and which is termed its good (v,9-11). When in possession of its good, it is said to be perfected and fully established in its dignity (viii,14). This state engenders felicity (iii,21+iv,8). In the case of man, the picture is complicated by the fact that he has two ends (v,9-11), because he partakes of two natures and exists in two orders of reality. His body is the medium of the temporal dimension (iv,9) in which he operates. This is of a material, contingent and transient world, a world subject to decay and the plaything of fortune (ii,26ff.). The standard of this order is not the individual but the community, and the goal which is aimed at, political felicity (vii,6-7+xi,12), the well-being that is of society. The goal of man's second dimension is contemplative felicity (xi,12-13), bliss as experienced by Dante in Paradise,[19] the contemplation of abstract substances (iii,22). It is an end which the individual seeks for himself in the immaterial unchanging and eternal world of the spirit, which lies well beyond the reach of fortune. Man's first dimension is the sphere of action, in which primacy is granted to the will (vii,19), the materialization of which is the act (vii,7). The will acts at the suggestion of moral virtues (viii,1-2), which are the subject of moral philosophy (xi,18-19). Any branch of learning which is related to this order, and which therefore admits of practical application, is an art (ii,17-18) or a discipline

(i,19+xii,18). The contemplative order, on the other hand, is the sphere of pure learning, of sciences (ii,17). This is the domain of the intellect and intellectual virtues, whose field of enquiry is natural philosophy (xi,18-19). The infallibility and immutability of the truths with which the intellect deals and the indubitable reliability of its logic are signified by the concept of habit(iii,4+xi,16), which also indicates the inurement of the intellect to that form of logic and truth.

Arms and letters in Ilicino's text typify, albeit imperfectly, these two dimensions of man's existence. The actual word littere however (e.g.ii,12) only designates the material instrument of man's quest for knowledge. The quest itself is described as studio (e.g.ii,3)and the object of that quest, the possession of which equals wisdom ("sapientia" - xi,13) and generates contemplative felicity, are le scientie (e.g.ii,4+iii, 5-6),[20] Ilicino does not use these three terms in any systematic way but their individual meaning is clear, and it is equally clear that together they refer exclusively to that type of knowledge which is comprised under the heading "natural philosophy" and is maintained within the bounds of the otio litterato (iv,21) being an end unto itself. Those men who lead their lives along this path are called huomini scientifici (iv,27), huomini speculativi (vi,19-20) or speculanti (xii,21). Their rivals in the querelle are huomini armati (iv,27) or militi (vi,21), and if letters are understood in a rather narrow sense, arms ("militia", "arme")[21] are given a meaning which in a way is even more restricted. The only type of fighting which the author accepts to take into consideration is the virtuoso combatere (viii,23-24), fighting that is which is informed by the virtue of prudence (viii,7-9+ix,14), one of the moral virtues, and thus derives its being from moral philosophy (x,16-17). In other words fighting is reduced to a kind of mental exercise (ix,14-18): the profession of arms is an art

(e.g. ii,17-18) and a learned discipline ("disciplina" - e.g. i,18-19), with the stress on learned.

The duel of these rivals is, as one might have expected, conducted syllogistically (ii,13-14). Ilicino takes his cue from the same lines of the Trionfi which inspired the anonymous "Florentine" commentator (see above p.103) and he organizes his arguments in a way not too dissimilar from the authors of the Knight and Doctor querelle. In a first section he puts forward four arguments in defence of letters (ii,9 - iv,27); in the central section (v,1 - vii,23) he clarifies his position by means of two axioms and two definitions, on the basis of which, in the last section, he refutes the pro-letters arguments and proves the superiority of arms (vii,24 - xii,3). Finally, in a sort of hazy postscript (xii,4 - 21), he manages to disavow, without patently doing so, the conclusions at which he had arrived or, to be more precise, at which he was induced to arrive by the authority of Petrarch.

What Petrarch says cannot be dismissed lightly, yet Ilicino is clearly embarrassed by the fact that such a man appears to be giving precedence to arms over letters: "in questo luogo occorre una necessaria e degna dubitatione, quale è, per quale cagione Messer Francesco attribuisca più gloria e più fama allo exercitio delle arme che a quello delle lettere, cunciosiacosaché molte ragione pare che sieno in contrario" (ii,9-13). The four arguments in favour of letters are almost identical to arguments used by Lapo, but because they are conveyed by a totally different terminology, they have quite a different ring about them.[22] The first one (ii,15-25) is that, the mind being nobler than the body and letters an attribute of the mind, whereas arms are an attribute of the body, letters deserve more praise than arms. In the second place (ii,26 - iii,15), letters are commended for being beyond the reach of fortune, whilst arms are beneath its

sway. Thirdly (iii,16 - iv,5) arms are said to be repugnant to the nature of man. They are disruptive of human society and destructive of friendship, to which man is naturally inclined, whereas letters are the bond of society and the cement of friendship and moreover lead man to his appointed goal, the contemplation of abstract substances. Finally (iv,6-15) only letters can engender man's felicity, which lies in the possession of knowledge and wisdom, where arms beget but worldly power. Therefore - concludes Ilicino, with words from Cicero which will become part of the stock-in-trade of the querelle - "cedant arma toge, concedat laurea lingue" (iv,25). [23]

In this first section Ilicino is very much at ease with his subject. Everything is straightforward. The major premise of each one of his four arguments is so self-evident - "la prima parte dello assumpto nostro è manifesta" (ii,19); "è medesimamente la prima parte dello assumpto nostro notissima" (iii,6-7); "ancora la prima parte dello assumpto nostro è evidentissima" (iii,23-4); "la prima parte dello assumpto nostro per sé stessa è nota" (iv,10-11) - that they hardly bear contradiction. No doubt Ilicino would have liked to cut short the querelle at this stage, but had he done so, Petrarch would have been shown to be in the wrong (iv,25-7). As this would clearly have been unacceptable, he was obliged to continue, against his better judgement and against the grain of sound philosophical reasoning: "nui nientedimeno, non ci partendo dalla intentione del poeta, confessaremo il vero, quantunque troppo siamo obligati a' philosophi, dicendo in fama l'armi alle littere dovere essere superiori" (v,1-4).

The first of Ilicino's two axioms in the central section of his discourse (v,9 - vi,8) is that the well-being of the individual is less deserving than that of the community, with arms aiming at the latter; and the second(vii,5-14) that "political felicity" is

achieved through the exercise of the virtue of prudence. Of the two definitions, the first concerns the main datum of this instance of the querelle, fame, which is said to consist of the praises given to men for the sake of their past deeds. To which it is added that military deeds are always known to the public and are therefore necessarily susceptible to praise (vi,9-17). Finally (vii,15-24) we are told that for the purpose of the argument the profession of arms ("militia") will be understood to mean only the perfect and virtuous exercise of that profession, and that the same will apply to the profession of letters.

On the basis of these two axioms and two definitions Ilicino proceeds to counter the four arguments with which he had introduced the querelle. Thus (vii,24 - viii,24) moral virtues too, and not just "scientific" learning, are said to be an attribute of the mind. The chief moral virtue is prudence and there are five categories of prudence, one of which is military prudence. This puts the "art of war" ("militare disciplina") on a par with letters, but because arms exist for the sake of the commomweal the "art of war" is in fact superior to letters. Ilicino's answer to the second argument (viii,25 - ix,27) is that only the outcome of the battle is subject to the whims of fortune and not military prudence itself, which is actually capable of controlling them by means of proper strategy. In reply to the third argument (x,1 - xi,9), arms are claimed to have been instituted only for the sake of defence and protection, which justify the undertaking of war, and in that respect cannot be accused of being disruptive of human society. The fourth and last counter-argument (xi,10 - xii,3) is that, just as individual (contemplative) felicity is obtained through the possession of knowledge and wisdom, so political felicity is gained through the exercise of prudence, and that philosophy does not simply consist of natural philosophy but of moral philosophy as well.

Ilicino is thus able to exculpate Petrarch. "Il nostro poeta è absoluto da ciascuno errore", he proclaims triumphantly. But he has not had an easy task of it. The arguments in this final section do not flow as fluently as those of the introductory section. Not even to their author, let alone the reader, are they self-evident any longer. When defending letters Ilicino had naturally bolstered his arguments with quotations from authorities: that was the correct deductive procedure. But he now has to enlist the support of many more authorities (there are twice as many quotes in the latter part as there are in the beginning) as though to convince everyone, including himself, of the veracity of what he is saying. Not even the major premises of his syllogisms go without saying any more; they too have to be supported with citations. What is more, whereas the pro-letters arguments had been presented as absolute truths, the pro-arms arguments are no more than qualified truths, for they only hold on certain conditions. Where in the beginning there had been talk of only one ultimate felicity ("ultima felicità" - iii,21), Ilicino now has to introduce the concept of a twofold felicity. He also has to circumscribe the acceptation of warfare, making it into something quite unreal (just war prudently fought), and to insist on the notion of fame as central to the debate, thereby depriving it of any substance, for to be famous is simply to be talked about(vi,11-13). In this way the pre-eminence of arms becomes quite harmless and does not impinge upon the true superiority of letters. Ilicino's conclusion is benign indeed. The question he had asked himself at the beginning was "per quale cagione Messer Francesco attribuisca più gloria e più fama allo exercitio delle arme che a quello delle littere" (ii,10-12). By the end gloria has been forgotten and fama, instead of a quality which resides in the beheld, has become an instrument of the beholder. The stress has shifted from being famous to being considered famous: "il nostro poeta ..., sicome è debito, prima gli armati che li speculanti ha descripti famosi" (xii,19-21).

More important still, it is Ilicino's description of letters and men-of-letters which at the end of the day deprives his conclusion of any real significance. Men-of-letters, as we saw, are huomini speculativi and letters natural philosophy, but not moral philosophy, not any "art" or "discipline" which pertains to the world of action. Men-of-arms on the other hand are entirely of that world and fame is an exclusively worldly notion. To compare huomini armati therefore with huomini speculativi is like attempting to square the circle, as they belong to two entirely different orders of reality. But in granting precedence to men-of-arms in the Triumph of Fame, Petrarch is simply and rightly (according to Ilicino) rendering unto Caesar what is his. Fame is the stuff upon which men-of-arms survive and thrive, whereas it does more harm than good to men-of-letters who are unduly concerned about it, by directing their gaze downwards to mortality instead of upwards to the "contemplation of abstract substances" (vi,11-17). In a worldly cortège of famous men therefore men-of-arms must justly precede men-of-letters; but this is a mere formality, a simple question of ceremonial precedence. Man's ultimate goal ("ultima felicità") remains the contemplation of abstract substances and men-of-letters alone can guide him thither.

A final seal is set on this true conclusion to Ilicino's arguments in what we have called the postcript of his querelle (xii,4-21). Here he is answering Cicero's "cedant arma toge, concedat laurea lingue." Cicero's quotation - says Ilicino - is irrelevant to the debate, because it applies only to a worldly context, in terms of which it confronts military matters not with pure learning but with civil matters (i.e. law and government). And Ilicino would not wish to contest the fact that, in a city, judges and elders must have precedence over soldiers: "nui concediamo i giudici et i prudenti sempre essere la prima parte e più degna della republica, sicome ancora Aristotile dimostra nel sicondo della Pollitica, e i

militi la terza in degnità o la quarta" (xii,11-15). Judges and elders, however, and civil matters are not what the dabate is about. It is about "gli habiti speculativi delle scientie". In the end therefore Ilicino manages to establish a three-fold order of precedence. In absolute terms, in terms that is of man's final raison d'être, huomini speculativi are superior to both militi and giudici e prudenti. In strictly worldly terms giudici e prudenti are superior to militi; and in what one might call promiscuous terms (for one is reminded of Tartagni's compromise) huomini speculativi must give way to both giudici e prudenti and militi for, as long as they live in this world, their activities, which are strictly speaking useless, [24] come under the aegis of men unto whom the government of this world has been entrusted.

Well may one wonder why Ilicino needed to construct such a convoluted argument, when all Petrarch had done was to put men-of-arms on the right-hand side of Lady Fame and men-of-letters on her left, without so much as suggesting that this implied preference or superiority. Naturally, if one is of the opinion oneself that to be on someone's right is a sign of honour, one would tend to understand Petrarch in the way in which Ilicino did. And Ilicino, as we saw, was not alone in giving that interpretation of Petrarch's motives in the Triumph of Fame. Since he disagreed with Petrarch however, yet dared not admit it openly, he could presumably have ignored the question, or at least not have stressed it so conspicuously, and no one would have thought twice about it. But Ilicino obviously felt compelled to explain how it was possible for a poet like Petrarch seemingly to show more respect for warriors than for his own kin. Petrarch's word was holy writ for Ilicino. It spoke the truth and therefore required careful exegesis whenever it was liable to be misconstrued. This could be one reason for such a lengthy digression at this stage of Ilicino's commentary. Another was probably Ilicino's desire to sport his knowledge.

He does so throughout his work, and what he wanted to show at this particular stage was that he was familiar with the querelle of Knights and Doctors and capable of emulating it.

We now know that the querelle was a popular topic for debate at the time and that it had been so for many centuries, that it was known to laymen as well, but that it was above all a subject for specialists at universities. Ilicino was a university man himself, likely to have come into contact with the querelle in that environment. Not many years had gone by moreover since Biondo had made his own idiosyncratic contribution to the debate and dedicated it to the same prince to whom Ilicino was to dedicate his commentary. It is far from improbable therefore that Ilicino should also have wished to supply his own interpretation of the question, using the methods and tools of his own trade. What he produced may seem too peculiar to owe anything to the traditional jargon of the jurists, but there are several passages of his text which show him quite clearly to have been acquainted with that tradition.

Many of Ilicino's basic philosophical principles are identical to ones enunciated by Homodeis who, like Ilicino, also used the syllogism to conduct his arguments (see above p.34). This though is likely to be a coincidence. It does not mean that Ilicino had necessarily read Homodeis's Quaestio. Rather it confirms Homodeis's indebtedness to the culture which was Ilicino's own, the Aristotelian culture of the Schoolmen.[25] The resemblance between Ilicino's final solution and Tartagni's compromise solution may be no more than a coincidence either. Tartagni spelt his solution out explicit/ly, whereas Ilicino seems to have arrived at his almost unwittingly. Other points of contact however between Ilicino and the querelle of Knights and Doctors are by no means coincidences. Ilicino quotes the famous "imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis

decoratam, verum eciam legibus opportet esse armatam" (vi,25-7; see above p.27), which he can only have got from the Corpus iuris itself or one of its Commentators. His text contains three other mentions of the Corpus iuris, in the very style of the legal experts: a ciphered reference to the relevant law (x,10;x,15;xi,3-4).[26] Throughout his text moreover he uses the words militi and militia in preference to arme, which is the word used by Petrarch (see above p.103), and this too suggests familiarity with the terminology of the querelle, although, is is true, the etymology he gives of militi is derived from Plato (x,6-7) and not the Corpus iuris (see above p.36). His militi are also huomini armati, like Lapo's and Biondo's; not just knights that is, but warriors in general. He makes sure however that only the worthiest of militi enjoy the privileges of the militia, which is not unlike the jurists' denying knightly privileges to all but true knights. Finally, and most revealing, when Ilicino says "nui concediamo" that judges and elders must be given priority over militi in a city (xii,11), he would appear to be taking issue with particular individuals rather than addressing himself to his readership at large; and since the concession he makes concerns the very crux of the querelle of Knights and Doctors (precedence), it is more than likely that the interlocutors he has in mind are the authors of that querelle and through them all doctors of law, to whom he wants to make it quite clear that his recognition of the pre-eminence of militi in the context of the Triumph of Fame must in no way be interpreted as a denial of doctorial privileges in real life. But more important at this stage is Ilicino's concern to take his distance from the tradition of the querelle. He mentions the disputed precedence of judges and militi only to emphasize that this is not what his own argument is about. His argument is "solo degli habiti speculativi delle scientie". Nowhere else does he provide such an explicit clue on how to read his text, and his doing so in the same breath, so to speak, with which he had recalled and then repudiated the querelle of Knights and Doctors, would tend

to suggest that that was the tradition from which he had drawn his inspiration and from which at the same time he wanted to break away. For anyone who might have felt tempted to understand his argument in the perspective of knights and doctors (which would have been the natural thing to do) Ilicino gives a warning that one is now treading on different ground.

The ground was both different and new. None of Ilicino's ideas, it is true, are particularly original in themselves. It is the way he fitted them together, creating the querelle of Arms and Letters, which is new. And he was quite aware of his originality. Of all the authors in this study (with the exception of Homodeis) Ilicino is the only one not to say that the question he is discussing is an old and much debated problem. To be sure, Ilicino's originality and his importance in the history of the querelle might not have been so obvious, had his successors and imitators not drawn attention to his text. They not only drew attention to it, as we shall be seeing; they quoted from it and sometimes even plagiarized parts of it. It may seem strange that it should have attracted notice, tucked away as it was at the heart of his voluminous commentary. But there were certainly plenty of opportunities for readers to discover it. The commentary, as we saw, was immensely popular. It went through twenty-four editions in the space of fifty years and was read all over Italy. There are copies today of its first fourteen editions in no less than fifty-one Italian towns, all the way from Udine and Trieste to Palermo and Siracusa, from Albenga and Mondoví to Galatina in the very tip of the heel.[27] The last edition was published in 1522, but half a century later Ilicino's querelle was still being cited as an authority of the subject (see below pp. 254 - 5).

As well as setting the querelle of Arms and Letters on its course, Ilicino had a significant influence on the very querelle of Knights and Doctors to which he was

indebted. When his commentary was first published in 1475, the querelle of Knights and Doctors had not yet achieved full independence. It was still confined to legal commentaries, and the chances are that it would never have gone any further but for Ilicino's commentary. The first edition of the Commentary appeared in Bologna, the home town of the querelle. Another fourteen years were to elapse, it is true, before that same city witnessed the publication of Bolognini's and Beccadelli's works, but meanwhile Ilicino's commentary had securely established its claim to fame, being republished five times, two in 1488, the year preceding the appearance of Bolognini's and Beccadelli's texts. Bolognini and Beccadelli, and later Lanfranchino, were presumably encouraged therefore by Ilicino's success to produce larger and popularized versions of a theme which until then had been mainly of academic interest. Faced with the challenge of an outsider, they decided to "counter-attack" and provide an "authorized" model of the querelle. Their endeavours bore no fruits however and the independence of the querelle of Knights and Doctors was short-lived, as we saw. On the one hand this was because Knights and Doctors were little amenable to more literary requirements and almost inevitably became metamorphosed once outside their natural habitat (legal textbooks); on the other it was because of the very success of Ilicino's commentary, which set the fashion for arms and letters in a world which in any case was probably more in tune with those terms and what they could stand for than it was with the jargon of jurists. Knights and doctors did not suffer a total defeat however and were not solely confined again to legal commentaries. They continued to inspire the querelle of Arms and Letters and we will find mentions of them in every subsequent work on the subject right up to the end of the sixteenth century.

This hypothesis regarding Ilicino's influence on the querelle of Knights and Doctors will become more plausible in later sections as we get to see just how

often he was in fact cited. But we already have one piece of evidence to lend it support. It is Cicero's "cedant arma toge, concedat laurea lingue", the war-cry of the contending parties in Bolognini's dramatisation of the querelle. This is Bolognini's only non-legal quotation and he does not otherwise show any particular familiarity with the classics. It is not preposterous therefore to suppose that he borrowed it from Ilicino, where it figures so prominently, and that it was Ilicino who thus inspired him with the idea of presenting the querelle in the way he did.

Ilicino's version of the querelle became very popular, but there was one field in which it remained conspicuously unanswered: the field of Petrarchan scholarship. By the early 1520s, when the last edition of Ilicino's commentary appeared, the vogue for Petrarchism was well under way and the reading public had become more interested in the voice of the poet than in the opinion of his interpreter. Commentaries were therefore reduced to the status of footnotes, while the poems were restored to their rightful position, both proportionally and typographically. Anything which detracted attention from the words of the master no longer being acceptable, Ilicino was bound to pass from fashion. He was replaced in the public favour by Alessandro Vellutello,, whose edition of Petrarch's vernacular poetry (Trionfi and Canzoniere), which first appeared in 1525, proved as enduringly popular as Ilicino's commentary had been. It was republished at least twenty-two times in the following sixty years.[28] Regarding the order in which Petrarch introduces men-of-arms and men-of-letters in the third chapter of the Triumph of Fame,[29] Vellutello has little to say: "ha il Poeta ne' precedenti capitoli detto di tutti gli huomini eccellenti in arme, che vide esser alla destra della trionfante fama, come quelli, ch'a gli huomini togati, c'hora in questo mostra haver alla sinistra di quella veduti, li propone."[30] There were to be numerous other editors of Petrarch's

Trionfi in the course of the sixteenth century, besides Vellutello, but almost none of them committed themselves more on this point than Vellutello had done. [31] Only two interpreted Petrarch's presentation of famous men as signifying precedence and superiority. In a 1533 Neapolitan edition the expositor, Sylvano da Venaphro, wrote: "et è da notare, che disse dalla banda manca, per mostrar che maggior dignità è quella dell'armi che delle lettere." [32] And in an edition of 1582, published in Basle but prepared some years before in Italy by Lodovico Castelvetro and dedicated to Alfonso II d'Este, we find the words quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "da man dextra, come in luogo di più honore. Onde dice il padre al figliuolo 2. Salmo, 'sede à dextris meis'. Et nella credenza apostolica, 'sedet ad dexteram Dei patris omnipotentis. ' ... Da man manca. Et qui non ha dubbio, che il P. ditermina, che più honore seguita dall'arme che dalle lettere, riponendo i capitani da man destra della fama et i letterati da sinistra." [33]

Ilicino, as the initiator of the querelle of Arms and Letters, may have had no following amongst his fellow commentators of Petrarch, but he did (be it or not a coincidence) amongst fellow physicians of his. The next three contributions to the genre were all made by physicians. All three moreover were composed for and dedicated to members of the Neapolitan aristocracy. The querelle, in its second stage, thus unfolded in southern Italy and in the ambit of the royal court. Its first contributor, in that new environment, was the court physician Antonio de Ferrariis, who is usually known, after the region of his birth, as Galateo.

B. Antonio de Ferrariis detto Galateo: De dignitate disciplinarum.

Galateo's version of the querelle, which was most probably inspired by "Ilicinum ... qui Franciscum Petrarcham [nuper] interpretatus est", [34] never achieved the publicity enjoyed by Ilicino's. It was a letter to a friend which today only survives in manuscript form. But Galateo, unlike Ilicino, gave his heart and soul to the matter, and as a result his version is much livelier than Ilicino's, much more interesting and also more revealing as a social document. Since it is so closely connected with Galateo's feelings and beliefs, to know something of his life and times is a necessary prerequisite to understanding the text.

Galateo was born in 1444 in Galatone. He spent all his life in the south of Italy, at Nardò, Gallipoli and Lecce, when he was not in Bari or in Naples. He only ventured to the north on a couple of occasions. The first was in 1474, when he spent just enough time in Ferrara to be examined and graduate "in artibus et medicina". Graduation was cheaper at Ferrara University than anywhere else in Italy and graduands were not required to have been students of the university. [35] This is what might have prompted Galateo to go there, and his informant on the matter was probably Gerolamo Castello, the court doctor of the Estensi "on loan" to the Duke of Calabria (the future Alfonso II), in whose company Galateo had travelled to Ferrara. Galateo's second trip to the north of Italy was in 1476, when he went to Venice (and probably Padua) at the invitation of his friend Ermolao Barbaro, who had been living in Naples for a couple of years (as a token of their friendship Barbaro was to dedicate to Galateo his translation of Themistius published in Treviso in 1481). Venice made such an impression on Galateo that as many as twenty-five years later, in 1501, he was able to write to Alvise Loredan:

"ego, sunt fere viginti quinque annis, paucis diebus Venetiis moratus sum. Mallem litteras nescire, unicum infelicitatis meae solacium, quam Venetias non vidisse", [36] which is no mean statement for someone whose lifeblood letters were. Galateo's last escape from the south was in 1510, when he went to Rome, but for what precise reason we do not know. On that occasion he met and befriended Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, the future Leo X, and wrote a letter to Julius II, offering to give him a copy of a Constantinople manuscript containing the text of the Donation of Constantine. Whether he ever did give it to him though, the story does not tell. Otherwise Galateo remained in the south, wandering from town to town as the vicissitudes of his career and the fortunes of his masters dictated.

He began his studies at Nardò, which had a studio famous for "physics" and medicine, and completed them in Naples. In 1471, although not yet a graduate, he was already a practising physician, in Naples. In 1490 he was appointed court doctor by Ferdinand I and he held the position throughout the last troubled years of the Aragonese rule. In 1501 he was forced to flee the capital and in 1503 we find him as court doctor to the Duchess of Bari, Isabella, daughter of Alfonso II and widow of Gian Galeazzo Visconti. He did not stay in Bari for very long, but to the end of his life Isabella remained his protectress and Galateo her devotee: "heroinam meam Alphonsi filiam, cuius opera, si hoc vivere appellandum est, Galateus vivit." [37] He died in 1517, in Lecce, where he had lived his last years and which, for many years before that, had been his home base: "ego praeteritis quadraginta annis - he wrote in about 1514 - administrationi lupiensis reipublicae saepe affui." [38]

Unlike Ilicino, Galateo never held any academic posts. For the whole of his life he remained a practising physician, and medicine not only provided for

his livelihood, wherever he lived, but it also tempered his mental outlook and beliefs. "Ego medicus sum" is a leitmotiv of all his writings. At the same time he was very conscious of being a philosopher too and not simply a doctor: "nos qui medici et philosophi appellari et haberi cupimus", he wrote to some friends in 1513-14.[39] As a physician cum philosopher, he would have studied not just man the physical being but man in his totality: man the social, moral and spiritual being, and man the creature of God in God's multifarious creation. As a result he was in a position to discourse with some authority on anything ranging from diseases to moral philosophy or from geography to metaphysics, and indeed such a wide range of interests is well reflected in Galateo's writings, above all in his charming and homely epistolario.[40] He also wrote a treatise on gout (De podagra), several works of geography (e.g. De situ elementorum, De mare et aquis, De situ terrarum, De fluviorum origine), a couple of religious works (Esposizione del Pater Noster and the dialogue Eremita - the latter more a satire of the Church than a theological work) and the ubiquitous Renaissance treatise on education (De educatione).[41] One of his biographers claims that he invented relief maps, but this has been denied by another, who nevertheless calls Galateo "un non comune cartografo", whilst admitting that next to nothing of his cartographical production has survived for us to admire.[42] Still, the wide scope of his interests is beyond doubt. Mario Santoro comes close to saying that Antonio was a typical uomo universale of the Renaissance (if such a creature ever existed), in terming him one of the most eminent representatives of what he calls "enciclopedismo umanistico".[43] Galateo just saw himself as a man-of-letters, though a man-of-letters par excellence: a man brought up on letters, a man whose raison d'être was letters and who believed that only letters could lead men on the path to salvation. There was a long tradition of learning in his family, which was of Greek origin. Galateo was a Greek Orthodox and his forbears had

been Greek Orthodox priests and men of erudition and culture: "avus meus et proavus et ceteri progenitores mei sanctissimi sacerdotes fuere, philosophiae et sacrarum scripturarum scientissimi." [44] He never allows his readers to forget that he is at heart a Greek and that Greek culture is his culture: "ego, ut ad philosophos redeam, veteres Graecos amo: hos colo, hos quotidie animo et oculis verso et me italograecum esse fateor ex hac parte Italiae, quae quondam Magna Graecia dicebatur." [45] So much a Greek did he feel to be, that on several occasions not even the achievements of the otherwise admired Romans seemed to him of much account when compared to those of his own nationals: "tanta erat apud Graecos philosophiae reverentia! Romani, si verum fateri velimus, verbis tantum et ad ostentationem philosophati sunt." [46]

Galateo was the surname given to de Ferrariis when he joined the Accademia Pontaniana in the early 1470's. A convinced academician, he remained attached to the Pontaniana for the rest of his life and even when absent from Naples kept in touch with other members of the Academy. Most of his friends and correspondents belonged to that circle, like Belisario Acquaviva Duke of Nardò (whom we shall have the opportunity of meeting again), like Marino Brancaccio, the dedicatee of his De dignitate disciplinarum, or like Sannazaro, to whom he dedicated his De situ terrarum (1501-02) and to whom several letters of his epistolario are addressed. He was friendly of course with Pontano, but no letters survive which the two men might have exchanged. So fond was Galateo of the Academy that he established an academy of his own in Lecce, which he ran along very much the same lines as the Pontaniana and which he describes with great affection in the letter De academia lupiensi et de Ingenuo (1496-1500), addressed to Crisostomo Colonna. [47]

The academic was the brighter side of an otherwise trying life. Despite the protection of mighty

friends and despite his official appointments, Galateo's material situation was never good and grew worse. He had to live through the difficult years of the French and Spanish invasions and throughout his life, but especially after 1480, he was obsessed with the thought of a Turkish invasion. The Turks had occupied Otranto in 1480 and Galateo, it would seem, had been an eye-witness of the invasion.[48] Thereafter he was in constant fear that they might come again, and another recurring theme of his letters is that something must be done once and for all to ward off any further threat of Turkish attack. This theme reaches its climax in a call for a crusade addressed to Ferdinand of Aragon in 1510 (De capta Tripoli).[49] It was not only as a Christian and an inhabitant of the most vulnerable part of Italy that Galateo feared the Turks, but as a Greek, who bewailed the fall of Constantinople as the loss of his motherland.[50]

Greece meant one thing and one thing only to Galateo: philosophy. Philosophy had been invented by the Greeks and they had taught the world to philosophize: "Graecorum inventum philosophia est habetque cum his nescio quid cognationis. Graeci philosophari docuerunt adeoque illis peculiare est philosophiae studium."[51] The Greek of Greeks, the philosopher of philosophers is naturally Aristotle, and Galateo is an Aristotelian to the very marrow of his bones, who believes that Aristotle is none else than the oracle of God: "quicquid Aristoteles decrevit, non ab imperatoris ore, aut a praetoris edicto, aut a senatus consulto, aut ab aliqua quavis optima republica sancitum esse putes, sed ab ipso Dei et naturae oraculo." Galateo's faith in Aristotle is such that there is no mountain it will not move, if the spirit of Aristotle be with him: "si mihi Aristotelis numen aderit, vel cum ipso Hercule luctari non formidaverim."[52] True, Galateo never forgets that he is a Christian (indeed one of the striking features of his writings is just how often he does quote the Scriptures and Church Fathers), but Aristotelian

doctrine has such a firm hold on him that more than once it will take him beyond the brink of heresy, if not outright blasphemy. In a passage of the De dignitate disciplinarum (censored by one of its earlier editors for being too unorthodox) he maintains that, moral virtues being specifically human and God super-human, God is incapable of justice. [53] At times it is really as though God were the oracle of Aristotle and not Aristotle the oracle of God. But the might of Aristotle's genius can become too formidable. Anticipating La Bruyère's "tout est dit" by a couple of centuries, in a letter to Belisario Acquaviva Galateo confesses to be awed into silence by the prospect of having to plod where Aristotle had trodden so divinely: "certe divinus ille vir calamum scribentibus, qui fuerunt, qui sunt et qui futuri sunt, extorsit de manibus." [54] The awe was soon dispelled however and Galateo's creativity visited most every field of learning, never stifled by the looming influence of the Stagirite. To be sure, everything he wrote is a variation on a peripatetic theme, but the spirit of Aristotle always vivifies the words of his disciple. [55]

As a Christian Galateo may well stray from the path of Catholic orthodoxy, but his belief in Aristotle will not allow of any deviation from the Peripatetic creed as handed down by the Master himself. Any follower who has adulterated the original purity of his philosophy must be cast from the fold. Averroes is "barbarus hic" and Albert the Great an impudent bel esprit, educated "sub frigido crassoque caelo", who knows nothing of Greek letters and yet dares to pose as judge and censor of "ingeniorum Graeciae". As for Scotus, his only achievement is that he has depraved the "sacrosanctam peripateticam disciplinam". But if they who have erred by excess of zeal deserve such invectives, woe be to those who have dared measure swords with the Master! On "insanus Valla" Galateo casts anathema: "abi hinc, Laurenti, in rem malam castigandus es tua ferula, non verbis!" It is the effrontery

to denigrate Aristotle which brings upon Valla such abuse, but it is also his belonging to that clan of "novitii atticissantes grammaticuli", superficial triflers who mistake the means for the end and rest their gaze on the empty shell of words (so says Galateo) without attempting to explore the true mysteries of Mother Nature ("arcana omnium parentis naturae"). [56] Knowledge truth and wisdom: that and that alone is deserving of our attention. Niceties of style or language are expendable. "Bonum librum non auri bractea, non purpura, non docta pictoris manus, non fucata verba, non ipsa elocutio, sed eruditio facit." [57] Valla's attack on the Donation of Constantine ia a typical example of a work with mistaken priorities, a work which treats surface as substance (for even if the Donation were a forgery - which is unlikely - its message is true). [58] Coluccio Salutati, a pretentious liar who believes he knows everything of which he is ignorant, meets with the same fate as Valla; he too was an enemy of Aristotle and, what is more, he dared (in his De nobilitate legum of 1399) to claim superiority for the active over the contemplative life. Cicero, for the same crime, is accused by Galateo of lese-majesty, [59] but Ilicino, strangely enough, is let off with a mild rebuke and is given the benefit of the doubt over the conclusions of his querelle in the commentary to Petrarch's Trionfi: he was either trying to flatter his prince or he was simply thinking in terms of fame. But he no doubt owed this indulgence less to the ambiguities of his argument than to the common heritage he shared with Galateo of Aristotelian, physician and philosopher.

There is much in common between Galateo's De dignitate disciplinarum and Ilicino's introduction to the third chapter of the Triumph of Fame, which as we have seen, Galateo had read. [60] Since Galateo mentions Ilicino's querelle in the context of the De dignitate disciplinarum it is more than likely that he was influenced by it, but whether he would not have written

the De dignitate but for Ilicino's commentary, it is hard to say, especially as his contribution to the debate is by no means exclusively theoretical (as is Ilicino's), but derives from a particular social context and owes a lot to Galateo's own experiences. It is therefore safer to explain the similarities of thought and expression between the two texts in terms of the cultural tradition common to both authors.

Written some time between 1490 and 1494, [61] the De dignitate was addressed to Marino Brancaccio (Marinus Pancratius), a Neapolitan nobleman, who was a faithful servant in arms of the Crown (he fought against the Turks at Otranto in 1480, against the Venetians in 1484, and against the rebel barons in 1485-86), a diplomat (sent by the King on a couple of missions to Rome and Florence in 1493) and a member of the Accademia Pontaniana, who died in 1497. [62] It survives today in only one manuscript of the period, [63] but there are likely to have been more, since it was read by other friends of Galateo's apart from Brancaccio, as we shall be seeing. Its title tells it to be not just about arms and letters. But it is mainly so. Several of Galateo's biographers have dismissed it as a confusing muddle because the thread of the argument is not always easy to follow. [64] It may have its inconsistencies, but it only carries a semblance of confusion. The clue to a correct understanding of it is provided by the allegory with which it closes. It is the allegory of Paris and the three goddesses. Paris is mankind and the three godesses, the three paths of life: pleasure (Venus), action (Juno) and wisdom or contemplation (Minerva). The multitude (Paris) chooses pleasure, those who are of a better mould ("excellentioris ingenii") opt for the life of action, but the happy few elect wisdom. As we know from Ilicino, the active life is the sphere of moral virtues, the contemplative life the realm of intellectu/al virtues. There are four moral virtues, prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, all

of which are needed to live well and happily ("ad bene beateque vivendum"). The intellectual virtues for their part only apply to speculation and cognition ("speculationi et cognitioni rerum tantum"), which is of three orders, the mathematical, the physical and the metaphysical. This is the scheme into which Galateo fits his querelle of Arms and Letters as Ilicino had fitted his. But in Galateo arms are the epithet of only one of the moral virtues, fortitude, whereas letters designate moral and intellectual virtues altogether: "quaestio haec non de terminis est, sed de tota possessione. Qui arma aut rem militarem nominat, unam tantum pronunciat ex virtutibus, quas philosophi morales appellant, fortitudinem scilicet, qui vero litteras dicit et moralem et intellectualem virtutis partem comprehendit" (p.50). The duel of arms and letters thus becomes a contest of virtues.

The reader can be in no doubt any longer as to which side Galateo supports. He had no choice really, as Aristotle had already passed judgement on the matter. And there is no appeal against a sentence of Aristotle's: "utra autem illarum dignior sit non oportet disputare: ab Aristotele enim lata sententia est, a qua non licet provocare" (p.50). Moral virtues are human and belong to man the rational social and tribal being ("homini inest, qua homo est animal rationale et sociale et gregatile" - pp.51-2). What is more, men share moral virtues to a certain extent with beasts ("quae circa mores versatur, hanc cum beluis quodammodo communem habemus" - p.54). But intellectual virtues are divine and abide in man insofar as there is a touch of the divine in him ("in quantum aliquid divinum in illo est" - p.52). As gods are superior to men, so then is contemplation to action: "tanto contemplativam vitam activae praestare puto, quanto intellectum sensibus, animam corpori, quanto hominibus deos immortales. Illa sola nos diis similes facit" (p.54). This statement however should not be read as a deprecation of the active life as such. Indeed moral

virtues have their own excellence and arms are an "ingenua disciplina" just as letters. The courageous ("fortis") man is a hero willing to lay down his life honourably for God King and Country ("fortis est qui audet ... pro diis pro patria pro suo rege honeste mori" - p.51) - like Ilicino, Galateo denies the quality of true warrior to anybody whose motives are none but the purest (say amorous or lucrative). The difference between action and contemplation is one of utility and dignity, the two categories which typify the two dimensions of man's existence and his dual finality. To choose the active life is to have regard for public utility and for the well-being of man here-below. To choose the contemplative life is to bear in mind the very magnificence of that life and the true perfection and ultimate felicity of man. Utility has connotations of servility: if something is of use, it does not exist for its own sake. The more useless a thing, the less need it has of anything else, the more noble it is. Here again Galateo is quoting a dogma of the peripatetic creed: "peripatetici non id quod utilius, sed quod honestius est et nobilius anteponunt. Unde et disciplinas quanto minus serviles minusque utiles, tanto nobiliores putant: illae enim propter se sunt, non aliarum gratia. Sed metaphysica omnibus praestat: quoniam nulli servit, omnibus dominatur: aliae propter ipsam, ipsa non propter alias. Unde non improprie sapientia appellatur, quam vel solus Deus vel Deus habet maxime" (p.61). Those therefore who take the way of contemplation, who strive to know all things human and divine, lead their mortal lives in the company of immortals and live like gods in human bodies ("hoc est vitam mortalem cum immortalibus agere, hoc est in humano corpore divinitus vivere" - p.67). They cultivate that quality of ours which, alone of all our qualities, will accompany us into the life beyond ("illa sola virtus nos in futura vita comitabitur" - p.54).

The De dignitate, we said, is not solely about

arms and letters. It also contains a short passage in which, instead of comparing arms to letters as such, and as though in response to the Knight and Doctor querelle, Galateo compares arms to laws. Here too he applies the scale of virtues. Both arms and laws (as in Ilicino) pertain exclusively to the active life. Yet laws, which comprehend all four moral virtues, have a certain affinity with intellectual virtues, and arms, as we know, only comprise one moral virtue (fortitude). Therefore arms must acknowledge the ascendancy of laws. To this same conclusion, reached from theoretical premises, Galateo also comes by way of the experimental route. Living at the time he did and where he did, he could not fail to appreciate the benefits derivable from a brave and strong soldiery. He knew only too well how certain occasions in life demonstrated the indispensability of troops under arms. When the Turks attacked Otranto, he says, as though to deflate the pretensions of doctors of law (but also no doubt to flatter his patron), they were not driven back by quotations from the Digest: "cum immanissima gens Turcarum Italiam invasit, quid nobis profuisset Scevola, Paulus et Ulpianus, nisi Alphonsus fuisset, qui a barbaris nos redemit?" (p.63). However, this does not mean that soldiers should at all times have the upper hand. It is precisely occasions like these which warn us of the perils of unrestrained might. Wars must not be waged for the sake of waging war. They must protect us without ("foris"), that we may live in peace and enjoy protection from the law. According to the axiom enunciated above (and with which both Lapo and Ilicino would have been in full agreement) warfare is useful, but the more useful it is, the more servile it must be deemed. It is not, like metaphysics, an end unto itself. And, as Cicero said (Pro Milone IV,10): "magis arma propter leges sunt, non leges propter arma" (p.65).

Having compared letters to arms and arms to laws, and in compliance with the generic title of his letter,

Galateo also gives some space in the De dignitate disciplinarum to that other and even more popular querelle of the time: the querelle of Law and Medicine (see above p.76). Here too he poses the problem in the established manner of the text. Medicine has two elements, the practical and the theoretical. As a craft ("opus") it handles the human body, but is inferior to laws (and "political science" - "civilis disciplina"), whose subject is the human body and also the human soul, and cities republics kingdoms and empires. In its other guise, it studies "elementa et regiones, situs urbium, naturas locorum et temporum et ventorum, vires herbarum metallorum et animalium, denique opificium humani corporis" (p.63), all works of God and Nature. In this respect it comes so to speak ("quodammodo") under contemplation, whereas laws deal with the works of men and belong entirely to the active life.

So far Galateo's text may not appear particularly original or dramatic, rehearsing as it does commonplaces of peripatetic thought. But when these get converted to the expression of social preoccupations, then the De dignitate comes to life and leaves behind the text of Ilicino in the field of academic discourse. Although the logic is dialectic, the syllogism is absent and the second person singular lends an air of urgency to the debate. Through the correspondence of two friends the reader is introduced to the royal retinue of Ferdinand I, where questions like these (like arms and letters) were often discussed to while away the time until the King's return: "hae quaestiones saepe nos otiosos, ut scis, dum regem expectaremus, sollicitabant" (p.50). And the De dignitate may well owe its conception to an interrupted reading of Aristotle's Ethics (in which the problem "de dignitate virtutum" is mooted in the first book and solved in the tenth), which Galateo and Brancaccio had one day engaged upon on the banks of the Volturno, when accompanying the King ("cum Ferdinandum sequeremur ad ripam Vulturni

amnis" - p.51). Beyond the royal retinue, where everyone supports his own side in the old ("vetus") and pending ("adhuc sub iudice") debate of arms and letters our attention is drawn to the open rivalry ("dissensio") of two professional groups, each arrogating absolute primacy to its own vocation, and we realize that the debate was not as otiose as its leisure-time function for Ferdinand's retinue may suggest or as certain modern critics have proposed.[65] The passage is so interesting that it deserves to be quoted in full.

Qui regibus serviunt, qui auspicatu suo magnas res gerunt, multas legiones ducunt, qui regna custodiunt, qui hostes propulsant, omnes rem militarem praeferunt, eoque argumento utuntur, quia tam sacrae litterae quam gentiles et ipsi divini poetae nonnisi fortium virorum facta continent, singularia certamina, pugnas, incursiones, obsidiones et expugnationes urbium, victorias et ex victis gentibus triumphos: quae omnia ad rem militarem pertinent. Ipsi heroes diis, ut aiunt, geniti, hac via caelum petierunt. Tot insignia, tot hastas, tot oscilla, tot vexilla et scuta in ipsis templis pendentia, tot titulos, tot praeclaras familias, tot principatus, tot imperia, nonne arma pepererunt? Denique, ut Aristoteles ait, militaris vita multas habet partes virtutis. Contra qui litteras tutantur, obscura esse omnia dicunt, nisi sint litterae, quae cuncta illustrant, quae deos hominibus conciliant, quae caelestem illam patriam, quae elementorum unde nos constamus et vivimus plantarum animantium omnium, denique ipsius hominis naturam hominibus nobis demonstrant. His constant regna, res publicae, urbes et ipsi exercitus. Leges, sine quibus ne vivere quidem possumus, ipsis litterarum monumentis servantur. Sine litteris nec reges, nec duces, nec milites, nec classes, nec ipsi piratae suo munere fungi possent. Nisi litterae essent, nec clarorum virorum facta nosceremus. Hae lucem humanis rebus ministrant, hae nostri memoriam plus quam aut aera aut marmora prorogare possunt. Sicut nec sine armis tuta, sic nec sine litteris clara aut beata potest esse vita (pp.47-8).

At this stage Galateo is simply presenting the case for either party without taking sides, but before long he will lay bare his sympathies and deliver a strong attack on those whose mental horizons do not stretch beyond the edge of the battle-field. The attack is in retaliation against the abuse (or what they believe to be the abuse) with which these people like to afflict those who wield the pen and not the sword by calling them "pen-pushers" ("calamarios"):

"nec dubitant non modo ii, qui magnis rebus gestis clari habentur, sed viles mercenarii milites, qui non pro gloria, non pro salute patriae, sed pro vili nomismate, pro tenui mercedula vitam exponunt, nos foeda ut putant appellatione calamarios nuncupare" (p.56). To this Galateo retorts by casting aspersions on the vacuous ideals of the warrior. Fortitude is a virtue which men share with beasts. Animals fight and fight well and have good reasons to fight, for prey and mate. Men say they fight for glory, but no stories tell of anyone who ever waged war against an impecunious people. Alexander attacked the wealthy Persians and Indians, not the Scythians. It is for silver gold and gems that men go to war, and to conceal their cupidity they call it glory, as though the thirst for glory were more excusable and more honourable than the appetite for riches. "Haec est illa heroica virtus, ut iugulemus homines" (p.56). Truly men should not fight at all, let alone for the sake of glory, for in so doing they counter the design of Nature, which created them "inermes et imbelles". Man's business lies elsewhere. Philosophy is the test of virility ("philosophi non multitudinis opinionem sequuntur, sed eorum qui vere sunt viri quamvis pauci sint." - p.53 - my italics), contemplation the polish of humanity ("qui vero contemplativam [vitam praetulerunt] ... ad perfectam hominis felicitatem [respexerunt]" - p.61 - my italics). Man's true form is neither fortitude nor any of the moral virtues, but his intellect. His life is justified by knowledge, not by good works, and his salvation is to understand, for Christ said: "haec est vita aeterna, uti cognoscant" (John 17,3). What Christ in fact said was: "uti cognoscant te Deum", and Galateo does quote the verse in full a few pages later, but his initial ommission speaks clearly for his conception of God. God is not the Rightful Judge, He is not the God of Hosts, or the God of Love and Charity. He is the All-Knowing, whose nous is the ordering principle of the universe and in whose image man was created. The power which he gave man over the rest of creation is the power

of intelligence not of might, and it is with his intellect that man will return to him again. Only if man falls in combat for the true religion will he reap a just desert, but otherwise he must not be lured by the sheen of swords from the path which will lead him to his one and only goal. The goal is the reading of that volume which brought bliss to Dante, and the only path the one plotted out by true philosophy: to "science" and "wisdom" ("scientia", "sapientia") by way of "speculation" and "cognition" ("speculatio", "cognitio") with the help of "intellectual virtues". Anything which does not show man this correct Aristotelian way, is not worthy of his consideration. The poems of Homer and Virgil are full of fire and destruction, Greek and Roman histories replete with war and death. Even the Holy Scriptures picture waste and devastation. The use of grammar we know from Valla. If his care for the empty shell of words owes him but contempt, Cicero and every other orator are of no more account, who love the hollow sound of words. They all speak to please the ears of men. Philosophers alone write what is pleasing to the gods ("philosophi ea scribunt et tractant quae plus diis quam hominibus grata sunt" - p.57). Philosophy alone is the beacon of salvation. And philosophy, more particularly "natural philosophy" is what Galateo, like Ilicino, really means by letters.

Because of his devout cult of letters, Galateo has frequently been cast as an archetypal specimen of that elusive thing, "humanism" (Gothein's opinion that "appunto pel suo punto di vista greco, il Galateo è riuscito a divenire il più notevole rappresentante della cultura umanistica", [66] is typical of the interpretations usually given of Galateo's "thought"). But we have just seen how in fact he does not simply exclude grammar, rhetoric and history (the traditional pillars of the "humanist" edifice) from his scheme of salvation, but actually condemns them for being more harmful than beneficial. However much he might have been exposed to the so-called "humanist" culture,

he makes a firm stand against Cicero and passes lightly over Plato to recognize only Aristotle and peripatetic philosophy as the hallmark of truth. And if that philosophy needs no seconding from behind, it does not either require assistance from above. Its teachings are never supplanted by the lesson of theology, its wisdom never superseded by the faith of the believer. Whereas Dante, in his ascent to God, at one point outgrows the habit of philosophy, for Galateo philosophy alone is the highway to beatitude. And although he is a professed Christian, there is little he entrusts the Church to do: his conception of the contemplative life is totally lay and secular.[67]

If letters (philosophy) beget salvation, it must follow that those who turn their backs on letters procure their own damnation. A life without letters is a man's death ("sine litteris ... vita morti aut brutorum vitae similis est" - p.48), and to escape eternal death there is but one solution. This, one feels, is the prime message of the De dignitate, clothed though it may be with a scholarly garb and addressed to one already converted. Men-of-arms need not abandon their profession (indeed Christendom would be the worse off if they did), but would that they tempered their hostility to letters and learnt to "simul discere et militare", like the men of old! The reverence of Alexander's army for the gods was equalled by its veneration for philosophy, and the Greeks and Romans did equal homage to arms and letters: "Graeci et armis et litteris, post captam Troiam usque ad Romanorum tempora, per totum orbem clari extiterunt; sed nec arma sine litteris, nec litteras sine armis exercuerunt. Necnon et Romani litterarum avidissimi fuere" (pp.56-7). Greeks and Romans despised as barbarians all nations which lived "sine litteris et humanis moribus" (p.48). We Italians - says Galateo - have inherited their usage of the word, but at the same time have contracted from the barbarians the taint which brought that appellation upon them: "nos Latini, immo potius semibarbari, quamdam a

barbaris ipsis labem contraximus. Qui arma exercent, nescio cur litteras despiciunt; qui autem litteras colunt, armorum et rei bellicae laudes praedicant" (p.57). Galateo does not question the meaning of the word barbarian. He simply expresses doubts as to the propriety of its current application. The whole world (the whole of Italy) has lapsed into barbarity, and ignorance is the rule (with but a few exceptions). The fault though is not of men-of-arms alone. Their taste has been pandered to by those who trade in letters; by those who write what is sweet to the ears of men, that is , by poets and historians, not by philosophers. If true learning were now given its fair due, not only would a remedy have been found to the ills of Italy, but men might even be saved. Man's true form is his intellect, and everybody must therefore turn to philosophy, for there is no-one who is not capable of receiving its teachings. Galateo's design is to open men's eyes to their real mission, and in so doing to rehabilitate learning in the eyes of those who deride "pen-pushers" and to restore it to the prestige it had once (as he sees it) enjoyed amongst the military.

Written in a mood of hope and optimism, the De dignitate yet sounds a note of scepticism. A universal redemption of this nature might never come to pass. Few will see the light and the multitude will continue to grope in darkness. But if men will persist in their obduracy and swords will not sometimes be turned into ploughshares, Galateo would turn philosophers into kings. Smarting under the insults of the soi-disant nobility, whose vainglorious ignorance rules unabated all around him, he pleads with passion for the restoration of natural legitimacy. Society may be divided into commoners and noblemen, but distinction should not be awarded in merit of social origin or military feats. A nobleman's mark is his allegiance to truth, where the people is blinded by error. The chief delusion of the multitude is its attachment to the life of action, with its meretricious pomp and deceptive splendour. Anyone whom

this glitter dazzles is a plebeian and so is therefore the self-styled aristocracy, which acknowledges no raison d'être but its sword.

Quite evident in the De dignitate, where he opposes the plebs, the vulgus, the multitudo to the philosophi, Galateo's conception of a cultural nobility comes to the fore in some of his other writings and in two of them in particular, which are more or less contemporary with the De dignitate: the letter De distinctione humani generis et nobilitate of c. 1488 addressed to Marco Antonio Tolomei (Antonius Lupiensis), bishop of Lecce from 1485 to 1498, [68] and the letter De nobilitate written in 1495-96 from Galateo's academy in Lecce and addressed to one "Gelasius", of whom nothing is known except that he was an intimate of Belisario Acquaviva Duke of Nardò. [69] Both letters contain a host of pithy sentences, all of which make tempting quotations. In the De nobilitate Galateo re-asserts with vigour what he had stated in the De distinctione and implied in the De dignitate, namely that only philosophers, lovers that is of wisdom and truth have a rightful claim to nobility, that only they can be true kings, only they real men: "philosophia est vera et constans nobilitas; philosophi igitur sunt vere nobiles, ne dicam cum Stoicis et Platone, vere viri, vere reges; ceteri omnes plebei atque ignobiles" (De nob. p.288). Neither wealth nor descent are valid titles of nobility, no more than strength beauty or honours, says Galateo, re-writing Aristotle's hackneyed discussion of nobility and claiming consistency with the conclusions of the Ethics, which give a definition of true nobility (whereas the Politics present only conventional nobility - "secundum communem opinionem"). In the De distinctione he had gone even further than to use philosophy as a yard-stick of social classification. Philosophers and non-philosphers are the only two categories of human beings he will recognize: "ii vero, quibus, si qua est in rebus humanis, inest sapientia, in philosophos et non philosophos

mortales omnes divisisse videntur " (De dist. p.104). This division is intended to do away with all divisions of race, creed or nationality. A Christian has more in common with a Gentile, if both are philosophers, than he has with another Christian who is not a philosopher. If a Latin and an Ethiopian both love wisdom, they share more between them than they do with any non-philosopher of their own race. To speak of Greeks and barbarians makes no sense, for there is more affinity between a Greek philosopher and his foreign counterpart than between Greeks and other Greeks who only have a partnership in their place of origin. Sometimes Galateo wavers in his definition of barbarians. Here and in the De dignitate non-philosophers alone, whatever their nationality, can qualify. At other times however - as in the De nobilitate - he gets carried away by his feelings as a Greek and an Italian to snub all Goths, Franks and other invaders of fair Italy as barbaric barbarians. But in all cases the trademark of barbarity is ignorance - "barbari, ut nunc quoque, semper oderunt litteras" (De dist. p.109) - and ill-manners the sympton of barbarism - "perniciosior barbarismus est in moribus quam in sermone: minus malum est in grammatica peccare quam in philosophia" (De dist. p.113). Such a definition is said to derive from a clear perception of what is essential to man's nature and what is incidental. The essence of man, that which distinguishes him from other creatures, is his mind; and it stands to reason that he should be rewarded with greater or lesser dignity the more or less he employs his substance. The better use he makes of it, the more virtuous he becomes. Virtuous is not only meant in the strictly Aristotelian sense of "applying the (moral and intellectual) virtues" but in the wider sense of "being good and just". In the De distinctione and the De nobilitate Galateo gives greater weight than in the De dignitate to this third element of the nobility-literacy equation: goodness. But it was always understood that the equation would be incomplete without it. Nobility is knowledge, knowledge brings truth, what is true is right and right is good. No more than he is ignorant, can a

philosopher be wicked: "nemo enim philosophus aut indoctus aut malus est" (De dist. p.105).

If knowledge, truth and goodness are the hallmarks of philosophy, their opposites are the staple diet of those who scorn philosophy. Ignorance, falsehood and evil are the basic elements of the life of action and arms their steadfast agents, the tool of usurpation and repression. Arms brought to power men who had no right to it and enslaved people who were entitled to their freedom. Every secular authority, from the mightiest to the most humble, owes its being to the force of arms and maintains itself by external injury and internal injustice: "liberos omnes nos natura genuit, servitutem sibi ipsi peperit mortalitas ... per vim, per arma, per caedes et scelera et fraudes et dolos, malos astus, proditiones, simulationes et mendacia orta sunt regna, imperia, divitiae et omnis quae sic appellari gaudet nobilitas" (De nob. p.274). Arms do not serve, as they should do, to defend the true religion, [70] but only to uphold the perverted will of the mighty plebeians who bask in the ostentation of their embezzled nobility ("populares, ...ii barbari a quibus nostri proceres nobilitatem traxisse se iactant" - De dist. p.107). Society, according to Galateo, is divided not, as we might say nowadays, into "haves" and "have-nots", but into "cans" and "may-nots", and Galateo is in no doubt as to which side he himself is on: "nobis villanis peccare non licet" (De nob. p.281). The indignation which this causes him comes out in a steady flow of abuse against the sham ideals of the noblesse d'épée - their spurious sense of honour (De distinctione), their vain belief that it is glorious to die in battle (Alphonsi II epitaphium), [71] their fanatical recourse to the duel (Ad Ioannem et Alphonsum Castriotas), [72] their patronage of firearms (De situ elementorum) [73] - and builds up to a crescendo in an invective where Galateo's social grievances mix with his cultural resentment and his national prejudices to produce what is almost a call for revolution, for to do obeisance to those, whose master you of right may

be, is more than one can tolerate ("ferre imperium eorum, qui tibi iure servire deberent, difficillimum est et bene instituto animo intolerabile" - De Dist. p.111):

O infelicem hanc Italiae partem! Rarus est, de quo non possit dici: maiorum primus quisquis fuit ille tuorum, aut pastor fuit, aut id quod dicere nolo. Quis est ex his, qui nobiles appellari volunt, qui possit ultra centesimum annum suae stirpis initium demonstrare? Cuius non pater aut avus ab externis, ne dicam a barbaris, Gallis aut Germanis venerit nudus, inops, famelicus, squalidus, pannosus, et hic locuples factus et clarus per caedes, furta et rapinas, nihil ubi unde venerat reliquit, nihil secum tulit nisi rubiginosum ensem et hastam. Nec fuere magna virtutis opera: vicere nos exteri non repugnantes, sed ultro vocantes ope et industria pontificum et principum romanorum, qui semper student exitio Italiae et iis nos servire cogunt, qui leges, litteras et bonos mores et ipsam humanitatem a nobis acceperunt. Vis ut his me comparem, qui nosti et patriam et patrem meum graecis et latinis litteris instructum, virum iustum, bene moratum, alieni abstinentem? Avus meus et proavus et ceteri progenitores mei sanctissimi sacerdotes graeci fuere, philosophiae et sacrarum scripturarum scientissimi. Audebitne aliquis venerando sacerdotum generi conferre latrones, praedones, sicarios, violentos, iniurios et barbaros? (De Dist. p.116).

The nobility which Galateo claims for himself and his peers is not a restricted privilege. Anyone may accede to it, provided he is correctly initiated; and correct initiation is by way of education. In the De distinctione Galateo swears to the indispensability of good instruction, for man is what he is brought up to be: "videmus potissimas in omni re partes habere institutionem" (p.115). This message is particularly intended for the magnates of his country, and Galateo provides them with a curriculum in his De educatione of 1504.[74] To readers familiar with educational treatises of the Quattrocento, the proposed course of studies will have an air of déjà vu. The pupil is encouraged to "graecis et latinis literis operam dare, musicam discere, gymnasticam exercere, equitare, venari, rem familiarem curare" (p.15). But Galateo is not content simply to rehearse common-places. Everything is channelled to the formulation of his message and no excuse is overlooked to recall the deliverance attendant upon the cult of letters. All ills are born of

letters rejected and education neglected: "omnium malorum causa est mala educatio, contemptus literarum, et pessimorum virorum consuetudo" (p.31). In this instance the ills are those of Italy and its sad plight beneath the yoke of foreign barbarians. The pupil, whose tutor is the dedicatee of the De educatione, is an Italian and it is imperative that he should remain Italian and not be allowed to suffer foreign misteachings: "Italum accepisti, italum redde, non hispanum!" (p.23). The chief misconception of the foreigners, of the Goths and Franks (read: French and Spanish), is of course their disapproval of letters, not simply as useless but as actually harmful to the profession of the warrior. They are plainly not familiar with the lessons of history:

> pace Gothorum, dixerim, et Francorum, quod impedimentum praebent studia literarum ad bene pugnandum, nisi ut fortius pro patria, pro libertate pugnare, mortem contemnere, et nonnisi iusta suscipere bella discamus, et temperantius, et clementius uti victoria, et bella gerere pro libertate, pro imperio, pro gloria, non, ut barbari solent, pro caede, et sanguine, rapinis, stupris et sacrilegiis? A literis ad arma Graeci, Macedones, Romani transire soliti sunt: qui quales fuerint, literarum monumenta declarant (p.11).

Whether Galateo's prejudice against foreigners owes more to literary tradition than to personal experience matters little, for beyond the Goths and Franks his message is aimed at all barbarians, be they transalpine or cisalpine.

Who would have guessed that a mere ten years later Galateo was to commit a complete volte-face? "Ego cum Gallis et Hispanis sentio, qui negant decere nobiles et proceres viros litteris operam navare: esse aiunt ignavissimorum et miserorum hominum cum libris clypeum, cum tabellis thoraca, cum pugillaribus pugiones, cum calamo gladium telumque conferre." The pen after all is not mightier than the sword and the noblesse d'épée was right all along. This is the disillusioned postscript to Galateo's thoughts and writings. It comes in a letter (the so-called Vituperatio litterarum) written in about 1514 and addressed to Belisario Acquaviva, the same person

to whom many years before Galateo had sent his De dignitate for approval.[75] Now he imagines what his friend will say to him: "was it not you who, against my better judgement, preferred letters to arms?" And Galateo would answer: "res humanae variae sunt atque mutabiles et, ut philosophi quidam dicebant, omnia esse in continuo fluxu et propterea nihil veri posse pronunciari" (p.205). On the surface this letter is an address to princes and it is in his capacity as a prince that Acquaviva is warned off letters (one reason being that when princes are too learned, they take the food from the mouths of those for whom learning is a livelihood). Galateo still maintains the distinction between utility and dignity, which he had introduced in the De dignitate, but he now informs princes which end of the stick is theirs to grasp: "qui arma litteris anteponunt, quamvis non recte, ut duo antistites sapientiae Plato et Aristoteles existiment, utiliora tamen suadent et quae vitae et libertati magis conducere videntur. Haec enim mihi videtur esse ars principum: donare primum et parcere, strenuos esse et peritos rei bellicae, opprimere malos ne aliis noceant, iuvare bonos ut aliis prosint" (pp.208-9). A prince's function is to look after the well-being of his subjects, to be useful to the people. This does not affect Galateo's hierarchy of values: dignity is still better than utility, letters are still superior to arms (in absolute terms), and philosophy and goodness are still synonymous, but a subtle change has now occurred in the way Galateo poses the equation. Philosophy equals goodness not because it makes a man good, but simply because it is indicative of the goodness which is inherent in that man, for only good men choose to study philosophy (and here the letter ceases to concern princes alone). In other words, education is to no avail. Man is not what he is brought up to be. He will die as he was born and letters, if he has any, will only shed light on his innate propensities. If he is born to virtue, letters will encourage him in that direction, but if he is born to vice, letters will be his pander: "litterae, qualem virum invenerint, talem relinquunt, sed

perfectiorem in utraque qualitate" (p.201). At best, letters may conceal one's faults ("litterae ... tegunt, non tollunt vicia" - p.205), at worst they are the cause of much evil. From past experience of two-score and more years in the administration of the city of Lecce, Galateo is forced to admit that all misinformed decisions were taken at the behest of men-of-letters ("literati"), who have now joined up with the magnates on the bench of those guilty of the ills which afflict Italy: "siquid male consultum aut male decretum est, illud nonnisi ex sententia aut ambitione aut pervicacia et impotentia et cupiditate aut potentum aut literatorum accidisse" (pp.199-200). And Galateo would seem to count himself amongst the guilty too, defining as he does literati as "theologi, philosophi, medici et iurisconsulti" (p.204). None of the old idols are now spared the fury of Galateo's iconoclasm. The Greeks and their philosophy are made to bow before the simple Scythians ("Scythae sine litteris sanctius quam Graeci cum tot inter se dissonantibus dogmatibus philosophorum, magistra et duce natura, sanctius vivebant" - p.207); the traditions of the family are being lost and it is better so ("scito me fateri multum debere filiis meis, quod paternas et avitas et, ita dicam, iamdiu haereditarias litteras neglexerunt" - p.214); and fault is even found with Aristotle ("maximum apud Aristotelem vicium est in investiganda veritate servare positum sive positionem" - p.206).

What was it which brought Galateo to this pass? Personal and national humiliation, no doubt. The more the barbarians crossed the threshold of his country and upset his way of life and of conceiving life, the wider did he see the chasm grow between the World and the Book, between contingent reality and ideal reality, until no key was left to reconcile the two and one had to be discarded in favour of the other: "nunc inter tot immensa volumina, inter tot, ut dicunt, medicinae et legum canones intemperate et turpiter vivimus. Quid igitur

prosunt litterae?" (p.207). His veneration of Aristotle had never blinded Galateo to the value of experiment, and with the passing of time he came to realize that experience afforded a better reading of life than the word of authority; and as he looked back over his years he wondered what he had gained from being a man of learning. Letters were finally put to the test of utility - and failed. And so our last memory of him must be his parting (written) words to Belisario Acquaviva and their tone of bitter disappointment: "contemne, abiice, abominare litteras, non minus viciorum quam virtutum genitrices et paupertatis comites (divinas semper excipio). ... Valeat philosophia falsa, fallax, loquax, mendax, nugatrix, stulta, nescia, vesana, arrogans, ignava, malesuada, famelica, nostri fundi calamitas, nutrix paupertatis et multo pluribus invisa quam probata. Bene vale!" (pp.213-14).

The De dignitate disciplinarum, even though addressed to Marino Brancaccio, was, as we said, also seen by other friends of Galateo's. How many actually saw it, it is impossible to say, but fifteen to twenty years after it had been written Galateo, in the so-called Apologeticon to his friend Niccolò Leoniceno, could drop its name without further ado, as though referring to a well-known text:

> aliud est apud ignaros iudices, ut ait Quintilianus, aliud apud philosophos disputare. Non possunt de philosophicis dissentionibus decernere qui civilibus detinentur. Ipse Cicero, absque dubio praestantissimi ac divini ingenii vir, contra duorum sapientiae antistitum Aristotelis et Platonis sententiam, activam vitam sanctissimae ac divinissimae contemplativae praeposuit quod, meo iudicio, lesae divinae maiestatis crimen est. Nam deorum vita ... contemplativa est. De hac re satis multa dixi in libello "De Dignitate Disciplinarum". 76

This short passage, which is a succint summary of all of Galateo's prejudices (against the Romans, against shallow orators, against the detractors of Aristotle and against the active life), is also a confirmation in his own words of what in any case should by now be quite obvious, namely that for him the querelle was not a question of precedence (which to a certain extent is what it was even

for Ilicino and Lapo), but quite simply a debate about the active and contemplative lives. These are the very terms in which Galateo presented the De dignitate for approval to his close friend Belisario Acquaviva, and the story of their correspondence on the matter and of Belisario's involvement in the controversy of arms and letters is not without interest.

Galateo sent the De dignitate to Belisario some time after 1497 and in a covering letter he wrote: "in praesentia nihil occurrit, nisi ut sententiam meam de armorum litterarumque et de contemplativae et activae vitae dignitate, quam Pancratio nostro olim scripseram, tibi quoque impertiar." [77] Since Belisario was an expert in both fields, he was bound to be the best judge on the matter and Galateo was therefore particularly keen to have his opinion: "litterarum enim ab ineunte aetate studiosissimus at amantissimus semper fuisti atque eos qui in aliqua doctrina praestare tibi visi sunt maximo semper honore prosecutus es. In re bellica quantum valeas omnes noverunt." [78] Well versed in these two fields Belisario certainly was. He and his elder brother Andrea Matteo (who was also to be Galateo's friend and to become involved in the querelle) were born, in 1464 and 1458 respectively, to Giulio Antonio Duke of Atri, one of the most powerful lords of southern Italy, and Caterina Orsini Countess of Conversano. They received their literary education from Pontano and their military training from their father. Andrea Matteo, who inherited his father's lands and titles after the latter's death at the hands of the Turks in 1481 at Otranto, followed the path of rebellion throughout his career. He was one of the leaders of the rebel barons in 1485-86, but was defeated and had some of his lands confiscated to reduce his power. He sided with Charles VIII when the French King invaded Naples in 1495 but was again defeated and this time saw all his lands confiscated. He retrieved them all however under a general amnesty a few months later, but when the French and the Spanish were

contending for control of the kingdom, he sided with Louis XII and was taken prisoner for two years in 1503. He managed to return to the favour of the Spanish by "courting" Ferdinand the Catholic when the latter came to Naples in 1506, but they kept him away from political life because they always suspected him of French connections, and sure enough, when Lautrec invaded in 1528, Andrea Matteo set out to join forces with him and was therefore immediately decreed contumacious by the Spanish. He died shortly thereafter at Conversano, in January 1529. Following his enforced retirement in 1506 he had devoted most of his energies to literary pursuits. He was an active member of the Accademia Pontaniana, he collected a splendid library in his ancestral home at Atri, he patronized the establishment of a printing-press in Naples in about 1525, and he wrote and published at that same printing-press in 1526 a commentary to Plutarch's Moralia.[79] As for Belisario he, unlike his brother, always remained faithful to the legitimate rulers of Naples (probably for want of anything more lucrative to do). He fought with them against the French, and was rewarded for his services with two counties which had been confiscated from his brother. When these were returned to Andrea Matteo under the general amnesty, Belisario was given the county of Nardò instead. He stood by Federico I until the fall of the Kingdom in 1501, whereupon he transferred his allegiance to the Spanish, taking part in many battles under the Grand Captain Gonzalvo Fernandez de Córdoba. When the latter fell from favour and was removed to Spain in 1506, Belisario also retired from active political life. In 1516 Charles V created him Duke of Nardò in reward for his services to the Spanish, and he died a few months before his brother, in July 1528. He too had been an active member of the Pontaniana; like Galateo he too set up his own academy (the Accademia Del Lauro in Nardò), and like Andrea Matteo he too swapped the sword for the pen when forced into retirement.[80]

When Galateo sent him the De dignitate to

read, Belisario was still a busy man, and his reply was therefore brief. Being a man-of-arms by profession, he felt it incumbent upon himself to defend his own calling and he justified the superiority of arms by remarking that that person deserves more praise who uses at once the power of his mind and the strength of his body: "ne tamen a nostra nostrorumque professione aberrare videamur ... arma litteris preponenda esse censemus. Hoc enim uno praecipue argumento coniectari potest: tanto praestantiorem armorum dignitatem esse habendam, quanto majori dignos laude, qui animi simul et corporis viribus praestant, quam eos, qui tantum animo serviunt, existimanus." Better than to confront arms and letters however, according to Belisario, was to see them united in one and the same man: "ne litterarum neve armorum dignitati detrahamus, eum qui et arma et litteras pariter amplexatur, majori dignum laude judicamus." As a paragon of such a man, or of a man rather who partook of both the active and contemplative lives, he cites Galateo himself, with his medical practice and his literary pursuits. And amongst his reasons for advocating an alliance of arms and letters (he also mentions the joys of reading and the necessity for philosophers to be kings or kings philosophers), Belisario stresses the need for comfort in adversity, when circumstances may have obliged a soldier to abandon his career: "etenim accedere aliquando potest, ut vel morborum eventu seniove vel aliis animi perturbationibus arma tractari non possint, quare ad litteras recurrendum esse, quis neget?" It is as though Belisario had premonitions of what was in store for himself, for in 1506 he was forced into retirement and turned to his books again. Before long he was to write a fourfold treatise for princes on how to educate their children and rule their state (De instituendis liberis principum), how to manage their household (Prefatio paraphrasis in Economica Aristotelis), how to deal with their free time (De venatione et de aucupio) and how to organize their profession (De re militari et singulari certamine). These pamphlets, which are not dated, were

published in a single volume in Naples in 1519.[81] They are preceded by a letter from Pietro Summonte, in which Belisario is commended for taking up his studies again after having endured the blows of fortune and for having managed to write his work in such a short time. This would mean that it was written shortly after 1506.[82] As well as Summonte's letter, the edition of Belisario's work contains, at the end, the letter Galateo had sent him to accompany the De dignitate together with Belisario's reply (to which the above quotations belong). Both these letters seem strangely out of place here. They are of a private nature and do not at first sight appear to be connected with the subject of the work. They must however have been included at Belisario's own request (how else would the printer have got hold of them?) and there must have been a reason for his doing so. The reason is probably that Belisario wanted to inform his readers that his treatise was to be seen as a reply to Galateo's De dignitate (an expansion of the ideas he had but adumbrated in his earlier reply) and as a contribution to the same debate on arms and letters and the active and contemplative lives. Indeed, as we shall be seeing, the dialectic of arms and letters is central to Belisario's argument. The intriguing question is whether, by recalling Galateo's De dignitate, Belisario was trying to cash in on its popularity or whether he was attempting to help his friend by drawing the public's attention to his work. On this point unfortunately even Galateo is silent. There is no mention in his epistolario or anywhere else of Belisario's treatise.

In his introduction Belisario explains the circumstances which gave birth to his treatise, in which resentment is mingled with great reluctance at having to wield the pen instead of the sword. Unfortunate events and the wickedness of men having forced him to give up his military career, and so as not to moulder in solitude and inactivity, he has turned to "litterarum ocium". But he would much rather be on the battlefield than at his

desk, and had it been possible, he would have gone abroad to fight, despite the objections of his family. As the laws of the land do not allow him to do so however, he will try and seek fame in another field of activity, writing as a prince what may be useful to princes. He is not writing, as the Ancients would have demanded, from the strong position of a preceptor morally beyond reproach, but in the capacity of someone who, despite his shortcomings, has the well-being of future generations in mind. He will teach princes how to administer their estate, starting with the education of their children, "pueri namque bene instituti, facti iam viri modestius rectius prudentiusque vivent." [83]

The De instituendis liberis principum begins with the infant, follows him through childhood adolescence and youth, and ends up with precepts to the mature prince, on how to act and conduct himself. It is the traditional Renaissance treatise on education together with a Mirror of Princes, in which paramount importance is attached to virtuous behaviour, from which the well-being of all those subjected to the prince will necessarily derive. Despite the all too familiar phraseology, the words seem to have a new and more authentic ring from the mouth of one whom we know was submitted to that type of education himself and who was moreover a prince and a master of both arms and letters. The children of princes should only play games consonant with their future career, "ad futuram pugnam", such as gymnastics war-games riding hunting and the like. They should be trained to endure both the heat and cold, but as soon as they are ready, they should undertake the study of letters, which will teach them all the virtues and qualities they will require:

multum enim pro regendis civitatibus rebusque publicis faciunt litterae. Niciphoro visum est regni philosophiaeque eandem esse rationem, ita ut affinitatis aliquid cum regno habeat philosophia. Nam scientiarum scientiam artemque artium philosophiam nominamus. Regnum vero aliis regni provintiis ac regem caeteris regni principibus dicimus imperare. Neque enim aliud qui sciens est dum imperat, dici potest quam philosophantium usum

exercere, dum maxime leges qui statuet, moralis philosophiae expers esse non debeat. ... Et quamvis parem non omnes ingenii bonitatem a natura sortiti sunt principes, ut quae subditis conducant satis perspicere possint, legendo tamen interdum quae praeclare doctissimi viri scripsere aut percunctando, maximam laudem assequentur. Dumque administrandarum rerum curis animus subtrahendus est, ad libros contemplandos tamquam e fluctibus tempestatum in pertranquillum portum animum traducant .... Qua de re conandum est omni etate discendum esse (pp.4v° - 5r°).

The stress throughout this short pamphlet (it is some twenty pages long) is in fact on the mental and moral education of children. Bodily exercises and arms are only mentioned briefly at the beginning, but they will receive a fuller treatment in the De re militari. Aristotle is the authority most often, not to say exclusively quoted by Belisario - "semper enim Aristotelis tui memor" he had said in his letter to Galateo - and it is Aristotle who presides over the next section of the treatise, the Prefatio paraphrasis in Economica Aristotelis. This section deals with the relationship between husband and wife, the role of the wife in the household and the function and treatment of servants, and is therefore not relevant to our subject. Neither is the following section (De venatione et de aucupio), which gives technical advice on horses hounds hawks hunting and falconry. The De re militari too contains much technical advice (on setting up and breaking up camp, on deploying troops for battle, on dealing with mutinies etc.), but a great deal of it is about the mental qualities required of a good general; and here once again Belisario advocates a necessary alliance between arms and letters. Its opening words proclaim that it is the duty of a soldier raised on letters and reduced to inactivity, to commit to paper what he knows about the art of war: "non minus turpe nos ducimus eos milites qui a primis annis litteras didicerint in ocioque versentur, non mandare litteris quae rei militari conveniant, quam patritium virum togatum suae civitatis iura nescire et artifices artium, quas exercent, rationes ignorare" (p1r°).
These things need to be committed to paper because they are useful to other soldiers, because in other words a

literary education is as much a part of a soldier's training as is practical experience, if indeed not more so. A few pages later, coming back to this subject, Belisario quotes the example of Federico di Montefeltro, who was the best Italian general of his day because he was a learned man: "legimus Federicum Urbinatum Ducem, temporibus nostris, ea litterarum disciplina valuisse, ut inter Italiae imperatores primum obtinere locum diceretur. Litteris enim adeo incumbendum censuerat, ut historiarum Aristotelisque tui Ethicorum libros semper prae manibus haberet, quod videretur nulla in exequendis rebus deliberatione uti imperatorem posse, si virtutum ipsarum effectus cogniti non essent. Dicere autem solebat: multo magis ratione atque artibus quam nimis milites imperatoris dicto audientes effici" (p.3r°). Belisario goes so far as to say that in a general at least intelligence and strength of mind are the first requisite: "ingenium animique vires imprimis imperatorem habere decet" are the opening words of chapter II ("Imperator qualis"). This means of course that he must be perceptive and virtuous, but also that he must be educated. His education will bear most fruits whenever he manages to sway his men with the power of his orations (here again we meet, as in Lapo though within a more confined context, the classical ideal of the orator): "sit etiam ingenio imperator litterisque pollens: ut ad dicendum ac persuadendum aptissimus habeatur, si quidem non tam ad arma capessenda insonans auribus tubarum clangor militum animos erigere atque ad ineundam pugnam impellere poterit, quam apposita et pro tempore accomodata imperatoris oratio" (p. 2v°). If letters however are an indispensable ingredient in the make-up of a perfect general, the military profession is second to none.

In singing its praises in the first chapter ("De militiae laudibus") Belisario (and he is the only one of our authors to do so apart from Biondo - see above p.68) had quoted what would appear to be the only ancient example

of an actual querelle, or at least of what comes closest in classical literature to resembling the medieval and Renaissance examples of the querelle, with its confrontation of res militaris and ius civile, the profession of the soldier and that of the lawyer: Cicero's Pro Murena.

"Cicero dum pro L. Murena orationem habuit, rei militaris virtutem, ait, coeteris praestare. Ipsa namque populo Romano aeternam gloriam peperit, ipsa Romanorum imperio terrarum orbem parere coegit; omiaque in tutela et praesidio tandem bellicae virtutis ponenda esse commemorat. Quod autem imperium sine militum arte viribusque stare diu potest, aut quod regnum stabile?" [84]

Belisario further praises the militia and milites in terms which remind one very much both of the Borsus and of the more traditional versions of the Knight and Doctor querelle:

qum militibus honor praecipuum praemium sit, virtutem ipsam praecipuam rem militarem esse censebimus. Tanta vero militiae est dignitas tantumque ei ab omnibus tribuitur, ut etiam obscurissimo loco natos eam ipsam exercendo quotidie illustriores fieri videamus. Quippe in antiquis legibus scriptum est, eos qui aliquo iuditio publico dannati sint adulterive fuerint inter milites recipiendos non esse, si quis vero militum in aliquod flagitium conspirarit vel si legio defecerit militia avocari, qui stationis munus reliquerit e militiae gradu reiici, qui sacerdotem interfecerint avocandos militia esse, sed nec in furcam, aliquo facinore comperto, damnandos. Unde facile iudicari potest tanti militia fieri, ut pro gravissimis etiam criminibus poena constituta sit solum e militiae gradu militem deiici (p.lv°).

It is not clear which if any "antiquas leges" Belisario had in mind or how ancient he believed them to be or where he had got his information from, but certainly most of what he says here could have come straight from the Corpus iuris or from some other contributor to the querelle. [85] He also mentions the legal bar on merchants becoming milites, though he has a touch of condescending indulgence for those who do not observe it, as things are in any case no longer what they used to be: "nec minus et ii qui mercaturae operam dare depraehendantur seque eiusmodi vilioribus negotiis deturpent, ex ipso militiae gradu pellendi putantur. Quod si aliqui tempestate nostra mercari milites

solent excusandi erunt, qum ab illis interdum nunc militia exerceatur, qui vitam utilitate non autem decore metiantur" (p.1v°). Belisario might have got his information at second-hand (from Pontano, for instance, whose words he frequently quotes in the De re militari - "ut Pontani nostri verbis utar"), but he pretends at least to be familiar with the literature on the subject and with the Corpus iuris in particular. His last sentence is a referral to the Digest for those who might wish to know more: "si quis autem scire volet quae nam res sint a quibus militem cavere oportet ne infamis habeatur, is Digestorum libros, ubi de militum excessibus tractatur, legat. Ibi enim causas quibus milites infamia notantur adiscet scietque a quibus cavere oportebit" (p.8v°).

Is this sentence, one wonders, meant to conceal the author's ignorance (he knows where the information is supposed to be, but he has not bothered to look it up), or does it simply denote a certain weariness with the subject he is writing about, a feeling that there is not much point in pursuing it, since it is anyhow all unreal? A few lines earlier he had in fact said that, his own treatise notwithstanding, there was in truth no better guide to warmanship than actual experience: "quae igitur militis sint partes, quae ducis, quod equitum, quod peditum sit officium diximus. Experientia tamen omnia melius docet, neque enim voce aut librorum copia sed militandi exercitio armorumque usu quae ipsis magis conveniant acquirere melius possunt" (p.8v°). Reading this in conjunction with his introduction (see above p.152), one cannot help but suspect that his heart was not wholly at one with his pen. We have seen how he had in fact only taken up the pen for want of something better to do. Now we can just imagine little Belisario sitting on Pontano's lap and being told the story of brave Duke Frederick and how he won all those battles because he had read all those books. With the innocence of youth Belisario took the story in; with the maturity of experience

hardened in battle he throws it up again. He cannot really get himself to believe in it, but it makes a nice story and it is as good a way as any of passing the time in the illusion of still being active and useful. His education - his indoctrination one might even say - at the hands of Pontano (whom he always recalls with affection) certainly left its mark, and in these pages one can sense him wrestling, not unlike Lapo or even Galateo, with the dream with which he had been imbued in his early days, and then finally rejecting it. But with him at least letters were a consolation of sorts in adversity (wheras they betrayed Lapo and finally deserted Galateo); even if his treatise did not tell the truth and even if it was to remain unread, at least it saved him from lethargy for as long as he was engaged in writing it: "ocium ac litteras amplexati simus ... ne ocio torpere ac ventri tantum (ut Salustius ait) et somno dediti vitam sicuti peregrinantes transire videamur" (Introd. p.1r°).

What kind of readership Belisario's treatise is likely to have had, it is difficult to say; but it must have enjoyed some degree of popularity for it to have been reprinted half a century or so later in Basle. His brother is certainly likely to have read it, for it is addressed to him (the treatise has no dedication as such - a nobleman needed not to seek patronage - but Andrea Matteo is apostrophized throughout).[86] It must also have been Belisario's wish that his book be read by the Neapolitan aristocracy, since beyond his brother it appears to have been intended primarily for them. Their most prized entertainment, we are told, was the discussion of matters of war, and the De re militari wants to be a contribution to that discussion too:

qum de iis rebus disserimus, vel cum hostibus propemodum manum conferere vel cum nostris Neapolitanis nobilibus colloqui et disceptare videamur, qui quidem ita de pugnantium causis iniuriisve saepe disputant, ut in maximis ducant rebus de militari inter se loqui posse disciplina, qum nihil militia praestantius, nihil laudabilius nobiliusque, nihil honorificentius inveniatur. Qua ex re omnia quae inter nos saepe numero agitata sunt ad te scribimus destinamusque (Introd. p.1r°).

In Ilicino the querelle of Arms and Letters appeared on the whole as a rather arid school exercise, but it was by no means so in Naples, and the pages of Galateo's and Acquaviva's works, despite their sometimes trite jargon and their frequent recourse to literary commonplaces, introduce us to a live social context, in which the champions of learning like Galateo had to endure at best the indifference and at worst the scorn of a proud and "sword-happy" nobility prepared to stand by the dignity of its rank and calling. In this context the querelle acquires real vitality, becoming as it does the vehicle for topical preoccupations. We will have further proof of the liveliness of the debate in the following section, in Agostino Nifo's De armorum literarumque comparatione comentariolus, which was commissioned by no less a personage than a one-time Lieutenant-General of the Realm with a view to settling the controversy once and for all, and in the indignant reply which the Comentariolus elicited from Luca Prassicio, another member of the Accademia Pontaniana, who dedicated his Impugnatio contra Augustinum Niphum to the very brother of Belisario Acquaviva, Andrea Matteo Duke of Atri. In the meantime however the correspondence between Belisario and his friend Galateo on the subject of arms and letters and the active and contemplative lives had been brought to a close in Galateo's Vituperatio litterarum (see above p.145ff.), in which Belisario is cynically advised to give up all attempts at engendering wisdom and to concentrate instead on generating wealth:

ego, illustris princeps, relictis litteris, et inani, captiosa, incerta et, ut Horatius ait, "insaniente sapientia", rei rusticae vaco, iam iam futurus rusticus. Tu si sapis, idem facito. Scio enim te ex hac re magnam capere voluptatem. Contemne, abiice, abominare litteras, non minus viciorum quam virtutum genitrices et paupertatis comites (divinas semper excipio); da operam, si quicquid credis Galateo, rei rusticae et oeconomicae,cuius finis, ut Aristotelis ait, sunt divitiae, quae solae hac tempestate in magno pretio habentur. 87

C. Agostino Nifo: De armorum literarumque comparatione comentariolus; and Luca Prassicio: Impugnatio contra Augustinum Niphum asserentem arma prestare literis.

The one-time Lieutenant-General of the Realm who commissioned Agostino Nifo to write a report on the subject of arms and letters was Andrea Carafa Count of Santa Severina. The report, entitled De armorum literarumque comparatione comentariolus, was completed on August 3rd 1525 and published in Naples on May 22nd of the following year by Evangelista Papienses, successor of Sigismund Mayr.[88] Nifo's brief was to provide a discriminating review of the issues in this long-standing dispute and to impose a lasting settlement on the contending parties. In his dedication of the Comentariolus to Carafa we find him accepting these terms:

magna inter mortales et quidem diu, Andrea Illustrissime, digladiatio fuit, Armane an Litere praeferendae sint ? Et pro Literis quidem rationes sunt non faciles, quibus literati viri se militibus praeferunt. Milites vero atque armati contra vi atque rationibus se literatis praeponunt. Exflagitas igitur, ut in tam gravi certamine definiam, quidve iuris sit decernam, perpetuumque silentium, si fierí potest, imponam, arbitrans iustiorem iudicem reperari posse neminem, cum Armorum non minus quam Literarum studiosus semper praeco fuerim (p.Iv°).

The outcome of Nifo's labours is what today we might call a consultant's report which, before drawing any conclusions, surveys "objectively" and in considerable detail all the evidence available on the matter. By adopting this procedure Nifo contributes to the querelle the first work which sets itself consciously and explicitly within a well-defined tradition, and the first work to acknowledge its sources of inspiration. In so doing he allows us to confirm the thesis of this study regarding the origins and development of the genre.

In a first section of the Comentariolus Nifo presents the views of others ("aliorum sententia") on the subject. After fourteen arguments in favour of letters and four in favour of arms, bolstered by many quotations but without specific assignation of paternity, five chapters

are devoted to the opinions (and their refutation) of particular individuals or groups of people. The first chapter (pp.VIII v° - Xr°) is entitled: "Quae M. Tullius sentiat quidve iuris doctores arbitrati fuerint de proposito a nobis problemate disputatur." Cicero in the De officiis, says Nifo (clearly referring to the "cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae"), [89] defended the pre-eminence of the toga, i.e. of letters and in particular of laws and "political science" ("civilis scientia") over arms, and of the tongue, that is of eloquence, over the laurels of military victors. Cicero's opinion, he continues, was taken up by more recent lawyers ("iuniores legum interpretes"), like for instance Angelo Aretino, who claim that the superiority of doctors of law is evidenced by their automatic right to ennoblement after twenty years of public service (a reference to the law of the Code "De professoribus qui in urbe Constantinopolitana docentes ex lege meruerunt comitivam" - see above p.38) and by the fact that even a doctor who has not occupied public office may bear the title "Imperatoris Antecessor". [90] These arguments do not impress Nifo however. It is their logic above all which he finds unconvincing, for these "legum interpretes ... ex bonarum artium inscitia distinguere nesciunt inter id quod per se est et id quod est per accidens" (p.IXv°). Arms are good in themselves - as Nifo will soon be demonstrating - but letters only accidentally so. Moreover, the power which an emperor has of creating a doctor count derives from the force of arms, without which no laws can be effective. Cicero and Roman lawyers are thus summarily disposed of and Nifo next turns to Petrarch. The second chapter (pp.Xr° - v°) is entitled: "Quid Petrarcha de problemate a nobis proposito senserit et an fuerit ita disputatur", and it explains that Petrarch in the Trionfi gave simple and absolute precedence ("simpliciter ac absolute") to arms by placing warriors on the right-hand side of Fame. A few discerning people ("nonnulli disertissimi"), quips Nifo, have concurred with this

opinion, claiming that the interests of the public are of greater account than private interests and that arms attend to the former. But their way of reasoning is frivolous ("frivolum"). Fountains and benches also exist for the welfare of the community, but no-one would ever dream of rating them higher than the individual good ("bonum"). It is only in terms of utility ("in utilitate") that the common good may be said to be superior, not in terms of perfection and dignity ("in perfectione ac dignitate"). Having thus disposed of Petrarch as well, Nifo next takes on the Romans ("Quid Romani de problemate nobis proposito senserint disputatur": pp.Xv° - XIv°). They too were misinformed, maintaining that man's supreme good ("summum bonum") lay in the possession of power and strength ("potentia et vires"). It was natural of course that they should have thought so and that they should have had greater faith in arms than in letters, since the Roman empire was the child of force and violence. Their faith however was misplaced, for if letters do not serve greatly the cause of hegemony, they are nevertheless the light and perfection of men ("hominibus tamen, quo homines sunt, perfectiones sunt et lumina" - p. XIv°). Power on the other hand can be the cause of much unhappiness ("plurimum miseriae"). Between these Romans and Cicero, there are those who take a half-way position. They are the "disciples" of Sallust ("Quid de problemate senserint qui Salustium sectantur disputatur": pp. XIv° - XIIIv°), who interpret his words "vires ingenio praestare cognitum est, cum bella geri coepissent" as having the following meaning: letters are preferable to arms "simply and absolutely", because they are the perfection of man qua man, and as such they remained unchallenged for the whole duration of the Golden Age, but in the post-lapsarian Iron Age in which men are living now and in which power and strife are the rule, it is arms which must have precedence. [91] According to Nifo, this argument too has a flaw. It rests on the erroneous proposition

("haec positio supponit falsum") that at one time in its history mankind did not have recourse to means of defence. And to disprove this proposition, Nifo proceeds to recount the story of defence from the beginning of Time through the Four Ages of man (with reference to Plato in Laws III). The last chapter of this section considers the views of "other Peripatetics and Platonists" ("Quid alii Peripatetici ac Platonici de proposito problemate senserint hic disputatur": pp. XIIIv° - XIIIIv°), who give priority to letters, though not to all of them, but only to those which they call theoretical or contemplative, of which metaphysics have pride of place. In so doing they claim conformity with Book XII of the Metaphysics, Book X of the Ethics and Book VII of the Politics, where Aristotle puts contemplation before action. To this Nifo retorts with Book I of the Ethics, where pre-eminence is conceded to "political science" ("civilis facultas"), Book VI of the Politics, in which philosophers are not granted the right of citizenship, Book VIII of the Politics, which asserts that to study too much is harmful, and with Plato's Gorgias, which advises one to philosophize with moderation.

Ilicino, it will have been noted, has pride of place amongst the originators of the querelle as listed in this section by Nifo. His name may not actually be mentioned, but there can be no doubt that it is his commentary which Nifo has in mind when he cites Petrarch on the subject and those who agree with him. And it is with a reference to a quotation given currency by Ilicino (Cicero's "cedant arma togae") that Nifo starts the review of his precursors. Moreover two of the fourteen pro-letters arguments with which the Comentariolus begins are a straightforward crib of Ilicino's own opening arguments; [92] and the tripartite organisation of Nifo's text (1. the opinions of others - "aliorum sententia"; 2. the clarification of the truth - "dilucidatio veritatis"; 3. the refutation of the pro-letters arguments from part 1)

is identical to the division of Ilicino's text. This of course might be no more than a coincidence (the product perhaps of Ilicino's and Nifo's similar formation and cultural background), but even if it is, there can be no doubt of Nifo's debt to Ilicino, which may in fact be even greater than appears at first sight. Nifo for instance quotes exactly the same number of words from Justinian's "imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis decoratam ..." as Ilicino had done,[93] from which one could hazard the guess that it was Ilicino who, as it were, introduced Nifo to the querelle of Knights and Doctors. Be that as it may, what is particularly revealing in this section is the fact that Nifo should mention knights and doctors at all in the context of a discussion on arms and letters, and more important still that he should mention them as though they were one and the same thing as arms and letters. He quite obviously saw the querelle of Knights and Doctors and the querelle of Arms and Letters as part of the same tradition. What is more, his placing the opinion of iuris doctores at the beginning of his survey of earlier writers on the subject clearly suggests that it was the doctors of law whom he viewed as the originators of the genre, and this is no mean evidence in support of our thesis regarding the origins and development of the querelle. It is true that Nifo is not always the most reliable of witnesses. He is a known plagiarizer of Machiavelli's Principe,[94] and it is difficult not to suspect someone guilty of that kind of offence of not forging his evidence at times. Who, one may wonder, are those "disciples" of Sallust who misrepresent their master's words? And who are those "other" Peripatetics and Platonists, whom Nifo so undiscriminatingly lumps together? More to the point: were they really contributors to the querelle, as Nifo implies they were? Their opinion as such is not implausible, but it is so unspecific as to belong almost anywhere. Maybe Nifo was trying to impress his patron with the depth of his knowledge and to make it appear as though he had done much research into the matter. Modesty

never was his strongest point, it would appear;[95] but in any case he must have been expecting remuneration commensurate with the apparent extent of his labours.

Nifo not only presents himself as a widely-read expert on the subject. He also poses as the victim of unjust attacks from his *adversarii*, and much of the *Comentariolus* is a rebuttal of their opinions. He never mentions any names however and we have no way therefore of discovering whether these enemies were real or whether they were simply invented by Nifo in order to give himself and his work more importance. If they were real and if all of them (there would appear to have been many) had made contributions to the querelle, then it must have been a very lively debate indeed in Naples at the time. We know from Galateo and Acquaviva that arms and letters were a favourite topic for discussion amongst the Neapolitan nobility, and it could be therefore that Nifo was taking revenge in writing against individuals who had crossed swords with him in conversation but whom he did not want to run the risk of offending by revealing their identity. It would seem more likely however that the opponents he was taking to task were not actual contributors to the querelle but philosophers from rival schools, for it is usually general misconceptions of his adversaries and mistaken ways of reasoning which he criticizes rather than specific points. There is only one name which we can venture to put on any of these *adversarii*. It is that of the philosopher Luca Prassicio, of whom we know for sure that he was engaged in ideological conflict with Nifo, and what is more, that he used the querelle (amongst others) as a means of exposing what he saw as Nifo's dangerously unphilosophical (unperipatetic) and heretical thinking. As a rejoinder to Nifo's *Comentariolus* he wrote an *Impugnatio contra Augustinum Niphum asserentem arma prestare licteris*. This work will be the subject of the latter part of the present section, but there is an unresolved mystery surrounding the duel of Nifo and Prassicio

(one which also seems to have passed unnoticed by other scholars) [96] and it requires attention at this stage. Prassicio's Impugnatio was published (in Aversa) on June 25th 1520, six full years before the publication of the work it was meant to be answering. There are no other editions of the Comentariolus and no known manuscripts of it, but if the date of Prassicio's reply is correctly printed and an "0" has not mistakenly replaced a "6" (which would still mean that the Impugnatio had been published before the Comentariolus, though not before its official date of completion), or a "2" replaced a "3" (which is improbable as it does not square with the biographical information we have on Prassicio), then the Comentariolus must have been in circulation in one form or another before 1520. In that case the 1526 edition is likely to be a later and probably a revised version of Nifo's work: and it could well have been revised in the light partly of the often scathing criticisms which Prassicio levels at Nifo in the Impugnatio. [97] There is not, it is true, the slightest overt indication in the 1526 edition of the Comentariolus that Nifo had either read or was aware of the existence of Prassicio's reply but, as we shall shortly be seeing, a closer study of the two texts makes this a not improbable conjecture. And if indeed Prassicio was one of Nifo's unnamed adversarii, and if there were others like him, it is hardly surprising that Nifo should have preferred to avoid the embarrassment of drawing his readers' attention, and especially his patron's attention, to a work which did not portray him in the most flattering of profiles.

Galateo as well could, one feels, have been one of Nifo's adversarii. They express themselves identically, which often makes it seem as though Nifo is echoing Galateo, yet Nifo defends arms and the active life, whereas Galateo had defended letters and a life of contemplation. We have no proof however that Galateo and his De dignitate disciplinarum were known to Nifo, and as

in the case of Galateo and Ilicino, our safest bet is to explain the similarities between them in terms of the cultural heritage common to both of them. Like Galateo Nifo was a physician and a philosopher, and like Galateo Nifo recognized only Aristotle as his master. [98]

"Nifo who was one of the most prolific and influential philosophical writers of the early sixteenth century, certainly should be made the subject of a monograph." Thus Oskar Kristeller in 1945, and the monograph has yet to be written. [99] In the meantime one still has to resort to a variety of mostly unreliable sources for information about Nifo's life, from which one draws a picture which is none too clear. [100] There is disagreement about the place of his birth but it was probably Sessa (he is often called Suessanus in the titles of his works) and wide disagreement about the date, which has variously been put at between 1462 and 1473. There is no more agreement about the date and place of his death, which might have occurred in Sessa or at Salerno some time between 1537 and 1546. On what happened in between however we are slightly better informed, although the dates remain uncertain. Nifo may have been a student in Sessa and in Naples but he was definitely at Padua, where he attended the lectures of the ardent Avveroist Nicoletta Vernia. [101] He himself began to propound Averroistic views before long; they brought him into conflict with the Paduan ecclesiastical authorities and he was talked into recanting them. He then entered into polemic with Pomponazzi on the immortality of the soul, and over the years he came to adopt an Aristotelian outlook of Thomistic persuasion, which always remained tinged however with a hue of Averroism. [102] No sooner had Nifo graduated than he was appointed to a chair at Padua, where he taught from 1492 to 1499 (with a leave of absence from 1496 to 1498), and thereafter success followed upon success. He was professor at Sessa (1499-1503), Naples (1504-5, 1510-13-?, 1531), Salerno (1507-10), Pisa (1519-

21-(?)25), Rome (under Leo X) and Florence (probably). In 1525 he even turned down an offer from Bologna University. His reputation was mainly as a philosopher but he did also teach medicine (in Naples for instance). Whether he was ever a practising physician though, it is hard to tell. In 1504-05 he was in receipt of a salary as personal physician to Gonsalvo Fernandez. It was probably in that capacity that he accompanied the Grand Captain on his campaigns against the French (see above n.97), but if the couple of remarks about the occasion in the Comentariolus are anything to go by, Nifo's services were primarily required as astronomer-cum-astrologist. None of our sources tell us either whether, as the opening words of the dedication of the Comentariolus would seem to suggest (see above p.160), Nifo ever bore arms and took part in battle. He was certainly a knight, though whether simply of the honorary kind, we do not know. In any case honours followed fast upon the heels of fame. In 1521 Leo X invested Nifo with the rank of Count Palatine and on the same occasion granted him the privilege of adding the name Medici to his own name, the right to confer bachelor degrees in theology, civil law and canon law and the right to ennoble three people.[103] Charles V was to dub him Councillor and Grandee of Spain, and Naples twice or three times rewarded him with titles of citizenship and nobility (1518, 1528(?), 1531). In 1525 he was awarded an annual pension of 200 ducats from the customs' revenues of Salerno by Ferdinand Sanseverino, the city's prince. He was a prolific writer on all aspects of philosophy (in the widest sense) and his works are too numerous to be recorded here. The Comentariolus belongs to a second stage of his literary career, in which he turned from writing more specifically philosophical (scholastic) works to writing works of a more moral or political nature.[104] It is a minute part of his total production and not a very significant one either. In the context of this study however, as we have seen and shall be seeing again, it has considerable importance.

Of the three sections of the Comentariolus it is the central one which is of greatest interest, for that is where the author's own opinion on the question is to be found. In the first section he merely recounts the views of others on the matter ("aliorum sententia"), and in the last section he refutes those views on the basis of the definitions and clarifications propounded in the central section. This section is entitled "dilucidatio veritatis" and consists of four parts: a definition of arms, a definition of letters, a decree ("decretum") and its demonstrations in favour of the supremacy of arms, and finally a discussion on the desirability of combining arms and letters.

We have seen that when Nifo presented the arguments of his predeessors in the querelle, he refuted each one, regardless of whether it advocated the superiority of arms or of letters. This was not because he always disagreed with the conclusions of these arguments, but because in each instance he could not approve of the way in which those conclusions had been reached. As far as he was concerned, they had been reached illogically; and so as not to be guilty of the same error, he decided to proceed cautiously and to leave no room for misunderstanding. That is why, first of all our authors to do so, he begins by clearly defining his terms: "quid pro [sic] Arma in problemate intelligendum sit" (pp.XIIIIv° - XVIr°) and "quid per Literas in problemate intelligendum sit" (pp.XVIr° - XVIIr°).

Arms are "all those things which brave and high-minded men are prepared to resort to in honourable combat in the face of death" ("ea omnia, quibus fortes viri ac magnanimi honesti causa pugnando parati sunt sese exponere periculis mortis" - p.XIIIIv°). There are three components to arms: the totally corporeal, the totally incorporeal and the non-corporeal which exists potentially in the body. Weapons ("instrumenta ferrea

aut lignea") are the corporeal element; the qualities ("habitus") and powers ("vires") of the mind, i.e. the moral virtues of prudence fortitude and magnanimity, are the incorporeal element; while muscle strength and might ("robur, vires, vastitas") are the body's potential, which one has naturally ("ex natura") but which must be trained and disciplined ("ex habitu et disciplina militari bene institute"). These three elements cannot properly be termed arms however, if three conditions are not at the same time satisfied. First of all the cause (the end) of war must be legitimate ("honesti causa"), and the terms of legitimacy are the following: "tyrannos exuperando, iura quae in legibus continentur defendendo, patriam parentes religionem pietatem tuendo, uxoris ac filiarum et sororum pudicitiam servando, ac iniurias omnes propulsando, quibus humanum genus deturpatur" (p.XIIIIv°). If the end is not lawful and arms are used, say, in the service of tyranny theft or robbery, they cannot justifiably be called arms ("aequivoce Arma dicuntur"). The means too must be proper (and this is the second condition). The three virtues are therefore to be untarnished (only equivocally speaking can violence, for instance, be said to equal fortitude) and good and thorough instruction is essential. No-one can be a true soldier unless he is familiar with the precepts of making war ("nemo enim bene militare potest, qui praecepta militandi ignoraverit" - p.XXIIIv°); "disciplina militaris" is indispensable to genuine warfare. Finally, it is only on the battle-field that all these qualities actually come into their own. Where there is no action arms are dormant ("Arma, cum in pugna non fuerint, potestate Arma sunt" - p.XVr°) and the soldier does not deserve his name ("milites ... a certaminibus dicuntur" - p.IXv°). To this it must be added that the good soldier is not always and necessarily he who wins but he who does not omit to do anything within his power in order to obtain victory (since victory itself lies beyond his control in the hands of fortune). If he does all he can and no more than he

may (keeping in mind the above conditions), then warfare is perfectly legitimate and is sanctioned by natural law, moral law and the law of nations. Mankind has always needed to protect itself, and to fight is part of being human.

It is also human to want to learn, and letters provide for man's instruction. Under the heading "letters" Nifo includes all branches of learning ("scientiae docentes"), which he divides into two categories, the theoretical and the practical. The purpose of the theoretical or contemplative sciences is the acquisition of truth ("veritas"): mathematics reveal the truth about numbers, physics the truth about "natural things" ("rebus naturalibus"), and metaphysics deal with supernatural and divine truths. On the practical or operative side the aim is good work or action ("opus aut actio"). Moral philosophy for instance instructs one how to live well, medicine teaches one the proper way to restore health, and military science ("disciplina militaris") imparts the correct rules of warfare (it is to be noted that, although it pertains to warfare, the "disciplina militaris" belongs to the category of letters and not of arms, because it instructs but does not "do"). In respect of their learning men-of-letters are called "literati, scientes, magistri ac doctores" (p.XVIIr°), but when they put their learning into practice they go by the name of their trade, e.g. civiles or medici . This distinction between learning and doing is an important one in Nifo's definition of letters. Letters as such have nothing to do with action. Their use is only "accidental" ("utimur literis et consilio, sed per accidens" - p.XVIr°), that is at second-hand, and they are not to be identified immediately with the acts or qualities which may derive from their possession. For example moral philosophy is about virtues, and the knowledge of moral philosophy does not necessarily imply virtuous behaviour. Letters, shall we say, are like a recipe-book, which is

only "accidental" (incidental) to the preparation of a good dinner. What per se makes a tasty dish are the ingredients, and you are a good cook if you know how to mix them well and not if you are simply able to read and understand the recipe. Similarly literati are not good qua literati, that is with regard to their knowledge, but only "quatenus ... ex Literis ad actiones se conferunt" (p.XXr°). The comparison is therefore between arms and action on the one hand and letters and instruction on the other: "est ergo comparatio definienda inter Arma ipsa, quibus milites armatique viri dicimur, quibusque utimur honesti causa ad opera fortitudinis ac magnanimitatis pro iustitia tuenda, et Literas sive doceant virtutes, sive res naturales, sive quodvis aliud, ex quibus literati scientes magistri ac doctores appellamur" (p.XVIIr° - my italics).

Nifo is an advocate of the primacy of arms. His defence of them is built around a "decree" which is given a twofold justification and the benefit of two more "probable" arguments. The decree ("Decretum in quo pro Armis decernitur": pp.XVIIr° - XVIIIr°) says that there exist two kinds of dignity (Nifo, like Machiavelli, is fond of schematizing). There is private dignity and there is public dignity. Private dignity makes a man more excellent ("excellentior", "praestantior", "dignior") than other men, but as such does not give him the power to rule over them. Letters are of this nature. A philosopher for instance is superior to non-philosophers, but in his capacity as a philosopher he cannot be a commander of men (so much for philosopher-kings!). Public dignity on the other hand not only makes men more excellent than other men but invests them with the power to rule. The public dignities are tyranny, monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, republic and democracy. Even though the common good may not always be worthier ("dignior") than the individual good (although it is always more useful), a public dignity is in every instance more useful worthier

and more excellent ("utilior" "dignior" "praestantior") than a private dignity. Arms therefore are more eligible than letters, for they not only enable one to assume ("potiri") a public dignity, but they perfect one in the best of private dignities: fortitude, magnanimity and justice, which is the sum of all virtues ("tota virtus integra" - p.VIv°).

The first proof of the veracity of the decree comes from the godhead ("Testimonium decreti ex numine": pp.XVIIIr°-v°). When a huge crater suddenly burst open in the middle of Rome, threatening to engulf the whole city, the oracle, according to Livy, announced that it would only be sealed by the gift of the most perfect thing which the city possessed. Curius, realizing that arms were Rome's most prized possession, armed himself from head to toe and bravely rode into the abyss, which immediately closed in upon him. According to Ovid, the same also happened to Callisthenes in Frigia. The second proof of the decree comes from Aristotle Pliny the Romans and other nations ("Testimonium decreti ex Aristotele et Plinio et Romanis et aliis gentibus": pp.XVIIIv° - XXr°). It presupposes a distinction between fame and honour. Fame ("fama", the popular name for "gloria") is the good <u>opinion</u> one has of that quality in a person which most people would like to possess ("opinio bona est, quae de aliquo habetur, quod sit bonus ea virtute quam omnes vel plures expetunt" - p.XXv°). Honour ("honor") on the other hand is the <u>token</u> of the opinion one has of a person's powers of benefic/ence ("inditium ... eius extimationis, quam quis habet de benefactiva alicuius potentia" - p.XIXv°); it is the honour, as it were, of the "Honours' List". Since benefic/ence can only take place in terms of welfare ("salus") and wealth, <u>literati</u> as such cannot be benefactors, for they do not have the means of looking after people or of providing for them, which <u>armati</u> do (<u>literati</u>, as we have seen, can only do good "accidentally" in so far as they

pass from letters to action). That is why histories (of the Romans and other peoples, in Aristotle or in Pliny) do not tell of any honours received by men-of-letters but are full of honours given to men-of-arms. Soldiers therefore deserve both fame and honour, literati only fame.

Of the "probable" arguments, the first derives from the definition of happiness ("Persuasio decreto [sic] ex definitione foelicitatis et expositione eorum, quae foelicitatem efficiunt, servant et quae foelicitatis sunt indicia": pp.XXv° - XXIIr°). A city, by means of just laws, aims to secure the happiness of its citizens. A happy life is a "virtù-ous" life, but it cannot be perfect if it does not know "sufficiency" ("sufficientia"). Therefore the definition of happiness is, according to Aristotle (Rhetorics I): "vita secundum virtutem cum sufficientia" or "fortuna secunda cum virtute". "Sufficiency" is to command the gifts of fortune ("cognitio bonorum fortunae"), and what fortune bestows is nobility friendship riches glory honour prosperity and power. Arms are more capable than letters of ensuring the acquisition of these gifts and it is through the ministry of arms that the virtues come to realization. Arms are therefore superior. Their superiority is also confirmed by the definition of "honesty", which provides the second of the "probable" arguments ("Persuasio decreti ex parte honesti atque eorum, quae honesta dicuntur": ppXIIv° - XIIIr°). This definition is again taken from Aristotle (Rhetorics I). What is honest is praiseworthy, and that may be anything which produces virtue, is a sign of virtue or is generated by virtue. As we have already seen, arms are the instrument of fortitude magnanimity and justice, whereas letters are only so "accidentally". Moreover what serves the common-weal (like arms), is more commendable than that which merely gratifies private enjoyment (as do letters). And finally the properties ("bona") which bring praise to the dead are preferable to those which do not bring such praise.

Many a mortal was praised and even deified by the gentiles for his feats in arms, but "per Literas vero nec mortui nec vivi laudati sunt" - with the usual rider however: "nisi quatenus ad actiones se contulerunt" (p.XXIIv°). Action is the dispenser of praise ("virtutis enim laus omnis in actione consistit" - p.XXIIv°), and arms outshine letters as deeds do words: "tanto Literis Arma praeferenda esse quanto facta dictis praestant" (p.XVIIIr°).

If one were to interrupt the reading of Nifo's Comentariolus at this stage, one might justifiably conclude that, philosopher and man-of-letters though he was, he did not hold learning of much account. Before he reaches the end of his dissertation however, he will have dictated a complete about-turn to his arguments, or at least to the conclusions to be drawn from them. Arms and soldiers so far enjoy unrestricted precedence over letters and literati. But not all soldiers may in fact benefit from this privilege. We saw a short while ago that one of the three conditions set for the proper exercise of the profession of arms was that the soldier be well instructed in the art of making war. Learning in other words is one of the soldier's necessary duties. Now Nifo almost turns it into the paramount requirement of his vocation. The Spartans were of the opinion that for soldiers to be good and strong ("forti"), all that was necessary was that they be inured to violence and hardship, that they learn to become ferocissimi ("Lacedaemoniorum opinio de Literarum cum Armis convenientia": pp.XXIIIr° - v°). Their conviction, says Nifo giving vent to the same prejudices as Galateo, is shared today by foreigners, by the Spanish the French the Germans and all barbarians, who as a result have totally ignored letters. Had they but known how wrong the Spartans were, they might not have imported their loathsome customs into Italy. Roman history abounds with examples of victorious generals learned in military science, and the more recent Italian history is not without its great captains either, who have followed in the footsteps of the

illustrious Alberico Romagnolo, the first in Italy to have practised the art of war: "ex iis vero, qui memoria nostrorum patrum militarunt, ex Italis praecipui magistri fuerunt Sfortia, Brachius, Franciscus Sfortia, Nicolaus Piccininus, Bartholomaeus Collionus, Federichus Urbinatum Dux magnus armorum doctor, Catamalata, Robertus Sanxeverinus, Robertus Malatesta Ariminensium Dominus ... et alii plurimi celeberrimi, qui tanquam ex Equo Troiano emerserunt ab Alberici Romandioli viri illustris disciplina, qui in Italia primus militavit" (p.XXVIv° - my italics).

A knowledge of the art of war, then, is indispensable to the proper conduct of battle. But it is only one of the three branches of learning with which the soldier - and the captain in particular - should be totally familiar. The other two are moral philosophy and history ("Moralem philosophiam, historicam ac disciplinam militarem esse militibus necessariam, praesertim imperatoribus qui exercitus regunt": pp.XXVIr° - XXVIIv°). Moral philosophy will teach him to behave virtuously ("fortiter", "strenue", "magnanime"), to be fair to the vanquished and to establish just laws, without which neither war nor peace are safe. War moreover must be waged with prudence, and history is an ingredient of prudence, which consists of the memory of things past, of the understanding of the present and of provision for the future. History is the memory of things past.

In addition to history moral philosophy and military science, there are some letters which are useful to arms, although they are not altogether indispensable. They need to be learned by a captain only up to the point at which they are still of benefit to his profession. Beyond that they do more harm than good. First amongst these is "divine science" ("divina scientia"), which imparts the knowledge of things divine, earns respect for them and induces one to lead a holy life, which in swaying men is more potent than an ornate oration. But orations also have their part to play and therefore eloquence ("eloquentia") is not without its use, to calm or arouse the soldiers'

passions as the need may be: "omnia conficit oratio, quae hostile ferrum neutique efficere valeret." [105] In the event furthermore that disagreements should arise between the men, a captain must have some knowledge of "political science" ("civilis scientia"), which is about litigation ("de causis forensibus"). It can also be of assistance though in the drafting of treaties or the conclusion of alliances. "Physics" too can prove valuable to a general. Nifo knows it from personal experience. When the Spanish were encamped near Montecassino, they received great fright from a shooting star (or a comet - "columna magna ignea"), but Nifo, with his explanations, was able to arrest their fears and turn the event into tidings of good things to come. A knowledge of physics can thus help to restore the army's courage or not to shake its confidence. The last of the useful arts is mathematics, especially that branch of mathematics which studies the stars, i.e. astronomy. But mathematics may also be useful to calculate the dimensions of fortifications and to work out the functioning of machines. "Discere igitur tales scientias oportet milites, quousque utiles sunt rei militari, nam si ob alium finem Literas huiusmodi discunt, sordide (ut Aristoteles inquit) et illiberaliter agunt et ad Arma non conferunt" (p.XXVIr°).

No soldier therefore, and especially no general, is worthy of that name if he is not well versed in both arms and letters. But since both are necessary to warfare (in Nifo res militaris is not a synonym of arma as it is in Ilicino or Galateo), another problem arises ("alia digladiatio emergit"), namely: which of the two is more necessary? Here again Nifo comes out without reservations in favour of arms, for the active cause of any action is more effective than its moving cause: "ad agendum potiorem causam eam esse dicit [Aristoteles] quae agit, quam quae consultat" (p.XXVIIIr°). Nifo though is an unreserved champion of arms only at a theoretical or ideal level. If all is well in the best of worlds, then arms and soldiers must indeed have precedence over letters and literati. The best of worlds however is long bygone. The

men-of-arms of to-day have dubious claims to authenticity. Their fighting is wicked and their motives are impure. They are therefore not only inferior to literati but they deserve total extermination:

ex iis patet, quam aequivocae Arma nostri aevi dicantur Arma, militesque qui eis utuntur aequivocae milites. Non enim pro religionis defensione, non pro patriae pro parentum pro amicorum quis iusti conservatione, sed pro tyrannide tuenda pro rapinis pro depopulationibus pro ruinis ac ominium malorum generibus pugnant. Qua ratione fit, ut milites nostri aevi non modo literatis viliores sint, verum etiam e medio tollendi ac omnino posthabendi penitusque exterminandi sunt (p.XXIIIr°).

This banishment order, which brings to mind the attacks by Lapo and Galateo on the unworthiness of contemporary soldiers, Biondo's refusal to accept the military of his day as in any way comparable to the military of Roman times, the limits imposed by Ilicino on the notion of militia, and to a greater extent perhaps the exclusion of all but true knights from military privileges in the Knight and Doctor querelle, is served quite casually by Nifo half-way through his text, and he almost immediately reverts to the plane of theory to pursue his defence of arms as though nothing had been said. He obviously did not want to leave the sting in the tail, hoping perhaps to avoid embarrassing the recipient of his Comentariolus who, if he had commissioned Nifo to write it with the purpose of settling disputes of precedence between soldiers and men-of-letters, would obviously, if he was honest, have to draw his conclusions from this casual remark rather than from the overall purport of the treatise. At the same time he was given sufficient leeway to disregard the logical consequences of the contemporary mode of warfare, if they were not to his liking, and by turning a blind eye to the imperfections of the soldiery he knew, to take refuge in the legacy of past generations of warriors which gave pre-eminence to the profession of arms.

What was primarily to the discredit of contemporary soldiers, according to Nifo, was their total contempt of letters, a taint with which, he says, they

seemed to have been contaminated through contacts with "barbarians": "exterae gentes, ut Hispani Galli Germani barbarique omnes, arbitrantes ferocitatem magis Armis quam Literas prodesse, penitus Literas neglexerunt. Hanc ob causam eorum milites prima elementa vix norunt. Signum autem nobis afferunt, nam qui corporis viribus plurimum valent ingenio rudes sunt. Hac pernitiosa ac barbarica opinione labefactati nostrates viri praecipui ingenii, qui hodie militant, Literas profiteri erubescunt" (pp.XXIIIr° - v°). Nifo here appears to be urging men-of-arms who did possèss the rudiments of learning not to be ashamed of admitting that they did, and those for whom learning was anathema to reconsider the reasons for their bigotry. The Romans after all, who became masters of the world, owed their supremacy to an equal cult of arms and letters. It is only barbarians who keep letters and arms apart, and that is the surest recipe for enslavement: "qui Literas ab Armis disiunxerunt, a sapientibus barbari dicuntur et natura servi" (p.XXVIIv°). What is this but a thinly veiled allusion to the situation of Italy? Indeed, despite Nifo's greater detachment and his stricter method, one gets the impression that he was aiming at the very same result as Galateo in the De dignitate disciplinarum. His prime concern was not really to establish the superiority of arms. What he wanted was to see men-of-arms, his contemporaries and fellow-countrymen, devote some of their energies at least to those studies which could improve them as men and at the same time make them better fighters in defence of their homeland, since arms without letters are like a sword without its blade. If it should seem strange to see Nifo expending so much ingenuity on constructing such an ambiguous defence of arms, one need only think back to Ilicino and to what he had had to contrive in order not to give the impression that he was disagreeing with his Master, when in fact he was. But Ilicino had nothing to fear of a master who only lived through the words of his poetry (unless he too was mindful, as Galateo in fact suggests, of what might

or might not have been acceptable to the dedicatee of his commentary). Nifo on the other hand had constantly to remember that the person to whom the Comentariolus was addressed, was a professional soldier, who was no doubt prepared to swallow so much of the truth only on condition that the pill be properly coated in sugar.

If both Nifo and Galateo were aiming at the same result, the likeness between them however stops at their respective definition of letters. When Galateo spoke of letters, he had in mind the contemplative other-worldly and immortal dimension of man. Nifo understands letters in purely worldly terms. He sees them as the light and perfection of men all right, but only "quo homines sunt" (see above p.162). He does not take account of the divine potential of man. The theoretical or contemplative sciences are certainly a part of his scheme (see above p.171) but, despite their more exalted object, they are on a par with other sciences. They are of human not of divine inspiration; the truths they reveal are consonant with human understanding; they do not lead man beyond his earthly horizon, but merely satisfy his needs as a rational and mortal being. This is where traces of Nifo's Averroistic thinking are still manifest. Towards the beginning of the Comentariolus he had discussed the contention that those letters which lead to beatitude must receive preference over arms ("Literas quae ad beatitudinem parant praeponendas esse Armis hic disputatur": pp.VIIIr° - v°). His reply was simply that there is no amount of learning which can ever bring man any closer to God: "quandoquidem et animus et Literae omnes, et quae sunt et esse possunt, ab illa divina infinitaque luce per infinitum intersunt" (p.VIIIv°). Without God's gift of quidpiam we are incapable of catching a glance of his eternal light in this life, and there is no other way we can do so. Learning therefore is an activity of purely human dimensions. This fideist profession allows Nifo to dispose for the time

being of the after-life and concentrate on man's existence here-below. As a result the dual finality and dual felicity of man is not a concept one encounters in his text. Happiness is to be found within the confines of the city alone (see above p.174), and *felicitas* is synonymous with *beatitudo* which, it is stressed, is *humana* and is defined as "vita sufficiens et secundum virtutes" (p.XXIXv°). Even the *summum bonum* is only that "quo maius in vita haberi non potest" (p.XXXIr°), namely the "actus fortitudinis". Given that man only has control over his earthly existence, the choice between action and contemplation is not a dilemna with which he must contend: life is action. That is why the relationship of letters to life is "equivocal". Letters do not equal action (any more than they do contemplation): they equal inaction, and it is arms which are action. Therefore "tanto Literis Arma praeferenda esse, quanto facta dictis praestant" (p.XVIIIr°). Arms then win the day. But, as we have seen, their victory is a hollow one, for not only is their superiority merely theoretical in the context of Nifo's own day and age; what above all receives commendation in the *Comentariolus* are the moral virtues. Dignity may be better than utility, and public dignity worthier than private dignity, but virtue is always what matters most and one's constant target must always be the *bonum*.

Luca Prassicio, in his reply to Nifo's *Comentariolus*, also argued that the purpose of man's existence was to seek the *bonum*. Yet he was in total disagreement with the conclusions of the *Comentariolus* as he understood them, or pretended to understand them. If it was the 1526 edition of that work which he had read, or an earlier but identical version, he certainly chose to see in it only what he wanted to see. He did not pay attention to Nifo's banishment order on all contemporary soldiers for wicked conduct, and neither did he give heed to Nifo's strong defence of letters as an indispensable component of the warrior's education. For him Nifo was

quite simply an enemy of learning and a partisan of arms. This so incensed him that he felt compelled to vent his anger and to strike back in support of letters. His counterblast to the Comentariolus was the Impugnatio contra Augustinum Niphum asserentem arma prestare licteris, cum lictere omnes sive speculative sive liberarie necnon et morales, inter quas legalis scientia est preclarissima, sic prestant armis sicut celum centro (the "legalis scientia" has no part to speak of in Prassicio's argument, but it is mentioned in the title as an advertisement no doubt for the reading public: to inform it that this work too, despite its more abstruse title, is about that well-known subject, or at least akin to that well-known subject, the querelle of Knights and Doctors). Was it the 1526 edition of the Comentariolus however which Prassicio had read? The Impugnatio, we saw (above p.166), was published on June 25th 1520 (in Aversa, "per Antonium de friziis Corinaldensem"). Nifo's Comentariolus, on the other hand, claims to have been completed in 1525, on August 3rd. There are hardly any clues to solve this mystery, but a closer look at the two texts may help to bridge the gap. From the point of view of overall structure and arguments, Prassicio is clearly addressing a version of the Comentariolus which is very similar to the 1526 edition. After an introduction (p.89r° i-ii), in which he sets out his own arguments in support of letters, there comes a refutation (p.89r° ii) of Nifo's definition of arms and letters, which contains near literal quotations from the Comentariolus.[106] This is followed by a refutation (p.89v° i-ii) of Nifo's decretum , in which Prassicio queries the distinction between public and private dignity. The body of the Impugnatio (pp.90r°i - 102v°i) is an attack on the third part of the Comentariolus and Nifo's own refutation of the fourteen arguments he had initially introduced to defend letters. Here again we find passages taken almost word for word from Nifo's work.[107] In a final section (pp.102v°i - 103r°ii) Prassicio answers the case made by Nifo at the beginning of the Comentariolus

for the pre-emience of arms [108] and which, according to Prassicio, Nifo had left unresolved "credens [rationes] esse demonstrativas moraliter" (p.102v°i). In part III of the 1526 edition Nifo does not refer back, it is true, to the arguments of part I in defence of arms, but the actual arguments which Prassicio impugns in this section do not match the contents of the 1526 text too closely. Unfortunately, in order to prove Nifo's ineptitude as a philosopher, Prassicio does not always confine himself to the Comentariolus but often looks for examples in some of Nifo's other writings. At times he may make an explicit reference to another work,[109] but frequently he does not, and although every now and then it is clear that he is no longer attacking the Comentariolus itself (at least the version of it we know), one can never be absolutely sure that he is not being carried away into fields other than the querelle by a casual word or remark from the Comentariolus. Towards the end of the Impugnatio for instance he introduces a long discussion on whether or not God is capable of knowing anything beyond himself ("extra se"). This topic does not appear in the Comentariolus of 1526, but Prassicio could well have been inspired to debate the matter by the following few words of the Comentariolus: "facere enim Deum dicunt omnia, non autem cognoscere omnia sed seipsum dumtaxat" (Comentariolus p. VIIv°). Just as it is not always possible to tell when Prassicio is referring to the Comentariolus and when he is not, it is hard to decide whether he chose for polemical reasons not to comment on certain passages of the Comentariolus, or whether he did not mention them because they did not appear in the version he had read. For instance, he accuses Nifo of corrupting the morals of the young by discouraging them from studying and learning: "videtur retrahere iuvenes ab illarum [i.e. scientiarum speculativarum nec non et liberalium disciplinarum] adeptione, quod quamtum sit detestabile, bene dispositi considerent" (p.100v° i). But Nifo, as we know, does quite the contrary and could not have been more emphatic in his

insistence on the necessity of cultivating letters: "qui Literas ab Armis disiunxerunt, a sapientibus barbari dicuntur et natura servi" (Comentariolus p. XXVIIv°). One is therefore left wondering who is deceiving whom.

There would appear to be only one safe clue in reply to this question. It is an argument attacked by Prassicio which is definitely on the subject of arms and letters but which definitely does not figure in the 1526 edition of the Comentariolus. It runs as follows: soldiers, when they are worthy ("digni") and very rich and in the suite of kings or princes, are quite superior to poor scholars ("licteratis docentibus miseris"), who can hardly afford to feed on barley bread.[110] There is no argument even remotely similar to this in the 1526 edition, and unless Prassicio invented it (and there is no reason to suppose that he did), it is most probable that the version of the Comentariolus he had seen was in fact an earlier one, which Nifo later revised (probably quite drastically) and whose whereabouts are still a mystery. To be sure, this is very slight evidence on which to rest a case, but at least it is unambiguous.

There is unfortunately no extraneous evidence to prove the point or to confirm that the Impugnatio was indeed published in 1520. The only mention it contains of contemporary events is an extremely vague reference to "his miserrimis et calamitosis temporibus in tota nostra Italia" (p.102r° ii) and an equally vague allusion to more personal problems of the author: "infortunia mihi adiis inflicta" (p.88v°). Whether these were simply the problems of old age, of which he speaks in the introduction to the work published together with the Impugnatio,[111] or whether they were of a different order, it is impossible to say, for almost nothing is known of Prassicio's life. He was from Aversa in the province of Naples, where the Impugnatio was published, and he belonged to the city's patriciate (in the colophon he is called "patricius aversanus"). His

grandfather Paolo had been chamberlain to King Ladislaus and his brother, another Paolo, became canon of the metropolitan church of Aversa, but it is not clear what Prassicio's own occupation was. By training he was a philosopher (as he himself never tires of pointing out), which means that he was probably a physician too.[112] He is the author of three other works besides the Impugnatio, one of which was also written in reply to Nifo.[113] He dedicated the Impugnatio to Andrea Matteo Acquaviva, brother of Belisario (see above pp.149-50) - "Illustri Hadrie Duci omni scientia omnique militari disciplina pollenti ac decorato" -, but no more can be inferred from the dedication than that his relation to Andrea Matteo was one of protégé to patron. He was, like Galateo, a friend of Pontano and a member of the Accademia Pontaniana, and he has been described as "il più cospicuo rappresentante dell'Averroismo in seno all'Accademia".[114] It is presumed that he died in 1521 or shortly thereafter, and if that is so, there can be no doubt at all that it was not the 1526 edition of the Comentariolus which he had read.[115]

Even to someone totally ignorant of the philosophy of Averroes the text of the Impugnatio speaks clearly of Prassicio's obedience to him. Leaving aside unspecified references, there are in all some hundred and fifteen quotations in the work. Of these, sixty-two are from Averroes and only thirty-six from Aristotle. Of course it is Averroes the Aristotelian whom Prassicio reveres and through him therefore the Master himself. Aristotle is auctor, Averroes expositor (e.g. p.93v°i), but more often than not they are put on a par and called uterque magister. Averroes's privileged position is that of the Son who speaks the Father's Truth to man in human terms. Nowhere is Prassicio's indebtedness to Averroistic principles more evident than in his demonstrations that faith and philosophy may lead to totally different conclusions, without either being rendered invalid in its own terms. He is always at pains to express his allegiance

to the Catholic creed but it is to the Peripatetic creed that he owes it first and foremost. When he does present divergent Catholic and Peripatetic views on a certain subject (for example on the relationship of reason to intellect or faith: pp.101r° - 102r°), both are set side by side but neither is said to contain more truth than the other. It would of course have been unthinkable, not to say heretical, to claim that the Catholic opinion was wrong, but not to say the same of the Peripatetic point of view is no doubt to accredit it with greater probability. There are instances, as in the case of the eternity of the world, where it is the Catholics and not "either master" who hold the truth, [116] but more often than not the Catholic belief is dismissed in just a few lines when the Peripatetic one is discussed over several pages: "omicto nunc nostros catholicos asserentes creationem nulli operi nature commisceri posse, nisi in generatione hominis propter creationem anime intellective in mistam necessario generationi hominis. Sed nunc de positione perypatetica ..." (p.96v°i). And St. Thomas is actually rebuked at one stage for getting carried away by "zelo fidei" (when discoursing on celestial bodies: p.95r°ii). In his dedication Prassicio claims to be bringing Nifo to justice both for his attacks on the Catholic revelation and for his attacks on the Peripatetic revelation: "et sic in hoc parvissimo codice seu libello impugno determinationem Augustini tamquam veritati perypatetice ac catholice regugnantem." It goes without saying that it is an act of heresy to go against the teaching of the Church, but it is heretical too, according to Prassicio, to go counter to the philosophy of Aristotle and Averroes, and in his mind it is the latter which is worse and needs most to be confounded: "nam hoc est horrible monstrum in doctrina Averrois" (p.95v°i). The aim of the Impugnatio is to do precisely that: to reveal how confused, how un-philosophical, how un-peripatetic the reasoning of Nifo is. "Domine Augustine, hec comparatio armorum ad licteras non est scientifica sed potius abusiva ac

impertinens" (p.89r°ii). "Propter hoc mihi videtur esse dicendum, ut perypatetice sentiamus, quod tam Aristotiles quam Averroes movent questionem..."(p.90r°i - my italics). The purity of the Masters' thought and logic is what Prassicio seeks to redeem, from the obscurity into which it has been dragged, by Nifo mainly, but also by all other "moderns": "nemo ante me ex modernis advertit quod ..." (p.101r°ii) is the recurring refrain of the Impugnatio. Only Prassicio therefore is the true continuator of Averroes, he the only legitimate heir to Aristotle. It is in that capacity that he hands down his reply to Nifo's Comentariolus.

Nifo had been instructed to impose a lasting settlement on the querelle and he had planned to do so by unmasking the illogicalities of his "adversaries" and replacing them with irrefutable logic, but he failed in his endeavours even before he had begun, and the voice which rose to indict him found him guilty of exactly the same offence with which he had charged all the other participants in the debate: muddled thinking. To prove how muddled Nifo's thinking in fact was, Prassicio in the Impugnatio invalidates one by one each of Nifo's arguments against letters. His indictment of the Comentariolus however rests on a single accusation, to which he returns again and again in the course of his harangue. By granting precedence to arms over letters, Nifo reveals, according to Prassicio, a complete misunderstanding of no less than the entire order and process of creation, as well as the nature of man and the essence of God. Man was created in God's image and intellect is the essence of God, who is "intellectus agens": pure intellect simply and eternally active (p.102v°ii). The separate substances who inhabit the heavens are also intelligentes and scientes , and they are not and cannot be (no more for that matter than God is or can be) milites (p.91r°), because their essence too is intellect (hence their proper name "intelligences"). They are potential intellect however, for they cannot exist and continue to exist unless they receive and continue to

receive intellectum from the Prime Form and Mover, God (p.103r°i). And they constitute different species, the greater or lesser their gift of intellection: "secundum rationem intelligentis et intellecti seu sciti et scientis" (p.101v°ii). Man, who lives in the sub-lunary world and therefore suffers the impact of matter (the cause of all evil and imperfection, "causa omnis maleficii et imperfectionis" - p.102r°i), nonetheless partakes of this superior order of being through his mind and intellect, which in his case too is his true form. Like the intelligences, the more he employs it the more exalted is his position in the order of creation. A learned man therefore, i.e. a man who makes use of his intellect, almost belongs to a different species from an ignorant man: "homo doctus, cum sit constitutus in ordine et gradu entium intellectivorum, iure subit rationem ingenerabilis et incorruptibilis; indoctus vero subit rationem generabilis et corruptibilis, enumerandus inter res generabiles et corruptibilies" (p.91r°i). Science and knowledge (letters) are thus the specific nature and destiny of humankind, and to ensure the implementation of God's design, this global pre-destination is re-asserted for each individual at the time of his birth through the agency of the stars:

> hanc partem pro Licteris contra Arma, Illustris Dux, assumunt astra ipsa, cum per se notum sit etiam apud parum in astris exercitatos: Mercurium, discipline et rationis dominum, super puerum quatriennem a lune regimine dominioque relictum ac exeuntem habere dominium, qui, cum sextum intraverit annum, tradendus est magistro eum docere incipienti licteras disciplinasque liberarias, quibus ducatur ad theoricas, maxime methaphisicam, qua ut proxima dispositione ducatur ad ultimam felicitatem. Ecce astra in principio nativitatis movere ad licteras, quod non aliter nisi ut principium suo fine perficiatur (p.88v°).

Whereas no one is born to arms, we are all born to letters and a man alive is a man "aptus natus habere [literas et virtutes]" (p.100v°ii).

God being intellect, his creation is an emanation of his mind, and science (knowledge) is the cause of all things: "scientia dei est causa rerum" (p.95v°ii). In that he understands himself, God who is

the All, brings his creatures into being and by a continuous act of intellection maintains them in existence. They in turn exist in that they understand and will continue to understand themselves and God. Nous is therefore the bond of creation, reason the "course and order of nature" (p.101r°). Nature in other words has a prescribed course, which can be maintained only insofar as the will of God is known and abided by. In human terms this means that man must be guided in his conduct by his reason, which allows him to understand what he must do or believe and enables him to believe it and do it the way he should. Man's reason is particularly responsible for his virtuous behaviour. Nifo had maintained that the virtues come about through action, and he thus granted primacy to arms, for arms empower man to commit, for example, the act of justice, i.e. to be just. For Prassicio this is to mistake the effect for the cause. One cannot be virtuous unless one understands what virtues are and how they are acquired (i.e. how to become virtuous), and an understanding of virtues is only given by the so-called speculative sciences: "non possunt acquiri virtutes nisi prius sciantur acquiri, sed sciri non possunt nisi per scientias speculativas, quibus essentie rerum comprehenduntur et speculantur" (p.101°ii). It is science and knowledge which make us good and live well. Those men therefore, those "licterati docentes" who lead us on that path, are superior to all other men. Indeed they are no mere mortals but earthly gods - "hi sunt fere dii terrestres potiusquam mortales homines" (p.89v°i) - , for to understand the good and bring it to pass is to participate in God's act of creation.

Understanding is a two-way process. By understanding, superior entities create inferior ones, and through understanding, the lower orders of creation are bound to the higher ones and ultimately to their one and only creator. Man's intellect is his instrument to a happy life on this earth and to a blessed life hereafter,

knowledge his path down through the world and up through the universe. The supreme form of knowledge is metaphysics (the speculative sciences), whose object is the bonum divinum , by acquiring which man comes into his "perfectione essendi" (p.89r°i). To claim, as Nifo had done (see above p.181), that man's summum bonum was purely humanum and was brought about through the agency of arms, and to question the superiority of metaphysics over military art (which, according to Prassicio, is synonymous with arms - see above p.177) is to verge on insanity: "si cui verteretur in dubium speculativam scientiam ceu methaphisicam prestare armis, is certe non esset sane mentis compos" (p.89r°i). The infinite excellence of letters is so obvious that it should become dogma and no-one allowed to question it. On those who do, Prassicio casts anathema: "igitur, ex solemni ac definitivo decreto omnium scientiarum maxime methaphysicarum mandatur esse perpetuum silentium imponendum sub notabili pena, ne unquam in posterum de hac re loquendum sit, cum etiam ad hanc definitivam sententiam influant atque concurrant ipsa corpora celestia necnon et eorum motores tam primus et totalis quam etiam et partiales, ut in prologo nostri codicili declaravimus. Et in hoc finem facio, literas excellere arma inproportionabiliter sicut infinitum finitum" (p.103r°ii).

These closing words of the Impugnatio bring us back to square one again. Prassicio ends his discussion in exactly the same way as Nifo had begun his (see above p.160): with an exhortation to perpetual silence, since the final word on the matter had now authoritatively been spoken. The reader for his part is left wondering who did in fact have the last word. The evidence, such as it is, points to a re-writing of the Comentariolus in the wake of the Impugnatio; only the material proof is lacking.

Prassicio was no more successful than Nifo in imposing silence on the querelle. Despite his threats of excommunication, voices were still to be raised in defence

of arms, though many more would be taking the side of letters. The querelle in fact was only just getting off the ground and was to witness its moment of greatest popularity in the second half of the Cinquecento. It is true that no further contributions (with one exception) were made to the genre from the south of Italy, though whether as a result of Nifo's and Prassicio's menaces it is impossible to say, but it seems unlikely that they could have had such an effect. No other writer either (with one exception again) was to take the matter quite so seriously as Prassicio had done, or even Galateo or Lapo. Returning to northern Italy, where it had originated, and to the fold of the vernacular, where Ilicino had set it, the querelle of Arms and Letters (bearing knights and doctors in its midst) was set to become a favoured literary topic, but its popularity brought with it a certain degree of superficiality. The purpose of the genre would no longer be to settle questions of precedence, be they strictly ceremonial or more truly existential, but simply to provide entertainment and to meet the demands of fashion. Despite these changes it kept up links with its past and in some cases, as we shall now be seeing, the links were very strong indeed.

Chapter IV

THE LATER STAGES OF THE QUERELLE OF ARMS AND LETTERS

A. Antonio Brucioli: Dialogo della preminentia dell'armi et delle lettere.

Agostino Nifo may have had adversaries, but he also had friends, if indeed a plagiarist may be called a friend. His name has already been associated, though indirectly, with that of Antonio Brucioli, because of a common debt they owed to Machiavelli,[1] but it had never been noticed that in fact they had something much more tangible in common. Brucioli's Dialogo della preminentia dell'armi et delle lettere is a straightforward plagiarism of many parts of Nifo's Comentariolus.

Although Brucioli has not received much attention from modern scholars and everything yet remains to be written about him, and although the Dialogo of Arms and Letters is an insignificant part of his total production (it is one of one hundred and five dialogues, not counting his other works), the fact of its existence at least has been more common and divulged knowledge than the existence of Nifo's Comentariolus; but what little information is provided about its contents has on the whole been misinformed. Frances Yates, quoting Delio Cantimori, wrote that "the dialogue on Letters and Arms 'revives the old contrast between the active life, especially political and military, and the contemplative life'," which is only superficially correct as we shall be seeing, and Giorgio Spini dismissed it as a "raccolta di luoghi comuni di modesto interesse", little suspecting no doubt how common the places indeed were.[2] There were three staggered editions of Brucioli's Dialogi, the first (1526-29) in four books, the second (1537-8) in five books and the third (1544-5) in four books, all three published in Venice. These Dialogi may not be very original in terms of contents, but there is no other work quite like them. They are a veritable encyclopaedia, in the vernacular, of all contemporary knowledge ("philosophy" as they called it), ranging in subject from man, society and the world through the heavens

right up to God the Creator. [3] When timidly releasing his first dialogues in June 1526 for public purview, unsure of his readers' response and of the reaction of the powers that be, especially in his native Florence from which he had been exiled and in Rome where the Medici were also in control (his fears are expressed in a kind of envoi printed at the very end of the volume after the colophon: "tempo è horamai poveri e rozzi miei figliuoli, nello aggiramento delle nostre traviate cure statimi già due anni di dolce fatica, che da i maggiori e più reverendi vostri frategli disgiungendovi, a vedere quello che per altri di voi si senta andare vi lasci "), Brucioli was aware of the originality of his undertaking, which he justified in his dedication to Massimiliano Sforza:

> a viva forza spinto a scrivere di questa santissima Philosophia.. nella materna lingua, essendone infino a nostri tempi stata poverissima... Et cosí per tutte le parti di quella con diversi miei Dialogi passato sono, de quali volendo hora una picciola quantità mandare a vedere ciò che di questo nuovo et tanto inusitato modo di scrivere si senta, gli altri a tempo più tranquillo riservando, come quegli che sono di più alto sentimento et di maggiore consideratione hanno bisogno.

The public must have responded favourably, for these thirty dialogues were followed in August 1528 by a second book of twenty dialogues dedicated to Francesco d'Este, younger son of Duke Alfonso I, by a third book of twenty-five dialogues in July 1529 dedicated to Brucioli's Florentine friend Giovanni Serristori, and a few months later by a fourth book of twenty-six dialogues dedicated to his friend of Orti Oricellari days, Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi. [4] The last dialogue of this book is the Dialogo della preminentia dell'armi et delle lettere, interlocutori le Armi et le Lettere. The success of the first edition led to a second edition some ten years later, which is of a far less tentative nature. The dialogues are re-organised (to what extent they were re-written still remains unexplored territory), [5] some have been taken away and some new ones added (the total being increased from 101 to 105), and the books, which are now given titles, are set in a more logical and progressive order. Book I of July 1537 (the equivalent more or less of Book I of the first edition)

is Della morale philosophia; Book II of October 1537 (the former Book IV with modifications) is Della naturale philosophia humana; Book III of November 1537 (the rough equivalent of the previous Book III) is Della naturale philosophia; Book IV, published in 1538 (an approximate copy of Book II of August 1528) is Della metaphisicale philosophia. Book V, which is a new addition, is entitled Dialogi faceti and consists of five dialogues of a less serious or more satirical nature collected from the first edition, the last of which is the dialogue of Arms and Letters. The other four are a "Dialogo della sapientia et della stultia interlocutori la Stultia et la Sapientia" (taken from Book I of the first edition), a "Lamento della virtù, interlocutori la Virtù et l'Angiol Michael" (from Book III), an "Essempio della vita humana interlocutori Theogeno et Carmene" (from Book I) and one "Della conditione dell 'huomo interlocutori due formiche" (from Book IV).[6] With the exception of this last book, in many of the dialogues (and in all the dialogues of Book I in which the speakers, reflecting Brucioli's nervousness, had originally been fictional Greek characters) old speakers, most of them from Brucioli's former Florentine environment, have given way to new ones. What significance this has for a reading of the text or whether it merely reflects Brucioli's shifting political alliances and expectations of patronage is another point which has not been studied and needs to be investigated. The various books too have been re-dedicated and this undoubtedly is indicative of no more than new hopes of employment and protection on Brucioli's behalf, for the wording is often left unchanged. The first four books are dedicated to members of the ducal family of Urbino (Duke Francesco Maria, his sons Guidobaldo and Giulio, and his wife Eleonora Gonzaga respectively), and the last one to the ten-year old Alfonso d'Este, the legitimized youngest son of Duke Alfonso I. The third and final edition is a replica of the second one, with new speakers in some instances and new dedicatees for each book. According to Carlo Dionisotti

the first dedication (to Cardinal Ottaviano de ' Medici) is still politic but thereafter Brucioli gave up hoping in men of influence and dedicated his work to simple friends of his in his new home-town of Venice (Vincenzo Cappello, Niccolò and Agostino Nale of Ragusa and Luca di Cerva also of Ragusa).[7] The third edition differs from the second in one important respect: the fifth Book, the Dialogi faceti (including therefore the dialogue of Arms and Letters), was not reprinted. The printers/ publishers this time were Brucioli himself and his brothers, who in about 1541 had set up a printing-press of their own in Venice, and Brucioli must therefore have decided that the Dialogi faceti were of little account or had not been popular enough to warrant the expense of a further edition.[8] That they had indeed not been too popular we may gauge from the fact that in some copies of the 1544-5 edition Book V of the second edition is bound together tale quale with the new version of the first four books; copies must have been left over, which the Bruciolis were now trying to get rid of. The reaction of the public is understandable. At the best of times Brucioli can hardly be called a good writer - "non era nato col bernoccolo della letteratura" says Dionisotti - and when he attempts to be more light-hearted, his lack of skill shows up even more, for there is no longer the serious intent of the subject to detract the reader's attention from the maladroit style.

Brucioli like Lapo da Castiglionchio belonged to that unhappy class of Renaissance men (victims all perhaps of the Roman dream), secular "clerics" who used their learning and erudition to seek positions which often did not exist and who were therefore reduced to living from hand to mouth whilst begging protection and employment from uncouth and sometimes illiterate grandees. Brucioli's erudition was considerable - he knew Hebrew as well as Greek and Latin - and so too were his productive energies, but they bore him little fruit. His difficulties were compounded by political victimisation and religious

persecution. Born in Florence around 1498, he joined the Orti Oricellari in 1512 and many of his Dialogi are said to reflect the discussions and conversations in which he took part there. When a plot was uncovered in 1522 against Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici and members of the Orti Oricellari were either arrested or forced to flee, Brucioli fled and sought refuge in Venice, following his friend and patron Luigi Alamanni (who is the most frequent speaker in the Dialogi). The next two years he spent in Lyons and then travelled to Germany, sent on a mission to the Emperor, it would seem, to intervene in favour of the deposed and exiled Massimiliano Sforza (the dedicatee of the first Book of the Dialogi). It is here, in France and Germany, it has been argued, that he first came into contact with and was influenced by the Reformation, although Carlo Dionisotti has recently suggested that his non-conformism had already been stimulated in Florence by the publication of works of Erasmus, of More's Utopia and of three anti-Lutheran works, two of which contained many passages for refutation of Luther's own writings.[9] Whenever and wherever his pro-Reformation sympathies may have been aroused, they are certainly well attested, as they repeatedly brought him into trouble with the Inquisition. He was later to translate the Bible (the so-called Bibbia Brucioli of 1532 which became the most influential Bible amongst Italian Protestants) and to write commentaries to both the Old and New Testament, which brought upon him accusations of heresy. He returned to Florence in 1527 after the fall of the Medici but soon became disillusioned as the piagnoni took control of the government. In 1529 he was arrested by the Otto di Guardia, accused of Lutheranism and of being a French agent; he was tried and banned from Florence for two years. He then settled permanently in Venice, writing, translating, giving private lessons and hoping for more lucrative positions. In 1538, or even before perhaps, financial necessity reduced him to becoming an agent and informer for his one-time enemies, the Medici. But economic difficulties did not affect his

literary activities. The Dialogi were his first work, after which he turned to what was to be his main activity, translation into Italian. The Holy Scriptures came first and they were followed by a series of pagan texts: Cicero's Rhetorics and Somnium Scipionis, Pliny's Natural History and finally the whole of Aristotle. He also provided new editions of the Decameron and of Petrarch's Rime and Trionfi. The last twenty years of his life were marred by repeated vexations from the Inquisition. In 1548 the Tribunale dei Savi condemned him to two years' exile, which he spent in Ferrara around the court of Renata di Francia. In 1555 they tried him a second time, on thirty counts of heresy, and he was made to recant. His abjuration however was not sincere enough for the Savi, who tried him yet again in 1558 and this time sent him to prison. The sentence was commuted shortly thereafter to a house arrest which, as far as we know, was not lifted before his death in December 1566.

We have come a long way with Brucioli. His world in the north of Italy, the heart of Europe, is quite a different one from Nifo's cosy niche in the conservative and very Catholic Kingdom of Naples. It is the world of the Reformation and Counter-reformation, a world with a new spiritual dimension and new intellectual horizons. Yet, far apart though they may have been, there was one obvious bond between Nifo and Brucioli: Aristotle. Already manifest in the subject of his early Dialogi, Brucioli's interest in Aristotle receives its most obvious expression in the steady stream of Aristotelian translations which will flow from his pen from the late 1540's onwards. Speaking of the Dialogi della naturale philosophia humana, the Dialogi della naturale philosophia and the Dialogi della metaphisicale philosophia, Giorgio Spini wrote: "aristotelico appare in massima parte il pensiero del Brucioli, pure accogliendo in sé voci ed echi di provenienza diversissima, sia dall'antichità classica, sia dal pensiero fiorentino a lui più vicino. I problemi però

che il nostro pose per primi alla propria riflessione furono ... i problemi, tipicamente fiorentini, dell'uomo, la sua moralità, le sue relazioni familiari, sociali, civili. Coll'esilio ed il contatto del Brucioli con l'ambiente veneto, il suo aristotelismo doveva uscirne rafforzato, fino ad eliminare presso che interamente le influenze di diversa provenienza, che abbiamo detto più sopra. Logicamente perciò il Brucioli doveva essere condotto a dirigere la propria riflessione verso quelli che erano i problemi più discussi dell'aristotelismo dei suoi tempi: il problema dell'intelletto umano e dell'anima, che divideva allora averroisti, alessandristi e tomisti, il problema del mondo e della sua coetanità o meno con Dio. Ed ancora una volta sarà forse il modesto ed oscuro poligrafo fiorentino quello che, meglio di più famosi ed originali pensatori, potrà darci l'impressione di quanto fermentava nella coscienza generale della società colta del suo tempo."[10] It is not unlikely that it was through Aristotle that Brucioli came into contact with Nifo and his Comentariolus. Nifo was the author of many commentaries on Aristotle, and one of the two works which were published and bound together with the Comentariolus is an Apologia Socratis et Aristotelis.[11] It is interesting to note that in his dialogue of Arms and Letters Brucioli, who otherwise left out all Nifo's quotations from classical sources, mentions only one authority by name, and that of course is Aristotle. "Come il vostro Aristotile pone" say Arms to Letters - vostro as if to underline that anything to do with learning had necessarily to be Aristotelian.[12] When Brucioli is likely to have read Nifo's Comentariolus and composed his own plagiarism of it, we do not know, but it cannot have been before August 1526 (the date of publication of the Comentariolus), unless Brucioli saw the version Prassicio had seen, and must obviously have been before 1529 when the dialogue was published.

What Brucioli did to Nifo's Comentariolus is no different from what he did, say, to Aristotle's Politics,

except that it must be called a plagiarism instead of a translation, because Brucioli tried to pass it off as his own. The barefacedness of Brucioli's pilferings is immediately obvious to anyone but slightly familiar with the two texts. A couple of examples will suffice as illustration. The first argument which Brucioli's Letters adduce in support of their claim to superiority is the following:

noi siamo tanto da essere anteposte a voi Armi, quanto sono da essere anteposti i beni dell'animo a quegli del corpo, essendo le lettere da essere connumerate fra i beni dell'animo, dove voi Armi, se per le forze del corpo siate prese, sarete da essere connumerate fra i beni del corpo, et cosí, quanto avanza di nobiltà l'animo il corpo, tanto vegnamo ad avanzare noi Lettere voi Armi; et se per gli strumenti dell'arte militare et non per le forze del corpo siate prese, fra i beni della Fortuna più presto che altrimenti è da connumerarvi, sotto l'arbitrio della quale noi Lettere non fumo mai (p.33r°).

The very first argument which Nifo, in the first section of the Comentariolus, had presented in favour of letters (and which he in turn had "borrowed" from Ilicino) reads as follows:

Litere inter animi bona ab Aristotile et Platone enumerentur, Arma vero, si pro corporis viribus roboreque intelligantur, inter bona corporis, si pro instrumentis rei militaris atque re ipsa militari, inter fortunae bona ... At constat tanto animi bona praeferenda esse fortunae atque corporis bonis, quanto animus corpori atque fortunae antistat. Literas vero fortunae nequaquam subesse testatur Aristoteles, summus naturae interpretes.13

In Brucioli Arms then answer with the following argument:

hor vedete, Lettere, quanto voi siate ingannate, anchora che tutte piene vi crediate essere di sapientia. La prima cosa, noi non siamo strumenti bellici solamente ma forze dell'animo et del corpo, conciosiacosaché nella militia l'uno e l'altro sia necessario et non poco si adopri, et più presto l'animo certamente che il corpo, essendo la virtù della fortezza, l'uso della quale mirabilmente nella militia vale, più conveniente all'animo che al corpo, per laqual cosa noi Armi haremo da essere numerate fra i beni dell'animo et del corpo, dove voi Lettere fra quegli dell'animo solamente (p.33r°).

Nifo, in the third section of the Comentariolus, had refuted the above argument in exactly the same terms:

per Arma non instrumenta bellica intelligimus solum, sed vires etiam animi ac corporis, quippe cum in militando animus et corpus agant, et quidem animus potius... Quae

ratio docet Arma Literis esse preferenda, quoniam et animi et corporis bona sunt, Literae vero animi dumtaxat. 14

At one point in the Dialogo Brucioli's Letters claim that God is called blessed for no other reason than that he knows and contemplates himself. Knowledge is thus God's essence and knowledge therefore, which is acquired through the medium of letters, is the perfection of man, who was created in God's image. To this Arms reply:

questo [i.e. Iddio], come voi medesime in più luoghi affermate, è parimente potente et sapiente. Hora, in quanto ch'egli è potente, principalmente impera al mondo, perché non è Signore e Re del mondo, se non in quanto ch'egli è causa di tutte le cose et principalmente in quanto che somma et infinita è la sua potentia; et come i Re del mondo per il loro potere imperano et con le forze dominano et per la scientia governano, cosí Iddio per la scientia provede, per la potentia fa, regna et domina a tutta questa mondana macchina. Onde, conciosiacosaché in ogni principe allo imperare sia di maggiore valore la potentia che la scientia, le armi, che sono la potentia dell'huomo, sono da essere anteposte alle lettere; senza che più principale causa è da essere tenuta quella che opera che quella che consulta, et conciosiacosaché le lettere ammonischino et consultino. et le armi operino, le armi fieno da essere anteposte alle lettere (p.34r°).

This is Brucioli's most literal translation of a passage from the Comentariolus:

astipulatur autem Armorum excellentiae Deus ipse qui, etsi pariter potens et sciens sit, non tamen quo sciens sed quo potens est, principaliter orbi imperitet. Non enim Dominus est atque re mundi Rex, nisi quo rerum causa est. Est autem rerum causa principaliter quo potens. Unde quemadmodum mundi reges potentiis imperant viribusque praecipue dominantur, sapientia vero gubernant. Ita Deus scientia providet, potentia facit ac regnat. Ad haec voluntas intellectu dirigitur libera potentia, qua libere potest facit. Quare cum in omni principe maior ad imperandum potentia quam scientia sit, Arma, quae sunt hominis potentia, Literis sine controversia anteponenda sunt, quae sunt hominis scientia ... Et Aristoteles Physicorum Libro Secundo principaliorem causam eam esse asserit quae facit, non eam quae consultat; at cum Literae moneant consultentque, Arma faciant, Arma nimirum Literis praeferenda sunt. 15

There are times when Brucioli's faithful, not to say unthinking translation of the Comentariolus can give rise to incongruities. Arms and Letters, who are the speakers in the dialogue, always refer to themselves or each other by their own name, Arms and Letters. At one point however and

without warning Arms start to talk of knights and doctors:

quello che valorosamente combatte per causa dall'honesto, fece bene, ma il dottore che insegnò ben combattere et bene militare, né bene né male combatte, siché i militi , che cosí dal combattere sono detti, sono da essere anteposti a dottori, che dallo insegnare sono cosí chiamati; et cosí essendo per voi Lettere i dottori et per noi Armi i militi, noi a voi saremo da essere anteposte, venendo a essere anteposti i militi a dottori (p.35r°).

This sudden apparition of knights and doctors does not mean that Brucioli was necessarily familiar with the querelle of Knights and Doctors, for all he is doing here is to copy the opinion of doctors of law ("iuris doctores") quoted by Nifo in the first section of the Comentariolus (and which, incidentally, Nifo had immediately refuted):

at qui strenue certavit honesti causa, benefecit. Doctor vero, qui bene certare ac bene militare docuit, nec bene nec male certavit. Milites igitur, qui a certaminibus dicuntur, Doctoribus praeferendi sunt, qui a docendo appellantur. 16

From these few examples we can see how closely Brucioli stuck to the original. He did not however make full use of it: only a third of the Comentariolus has ended up in the Dialogo. Most of the arguments which he uses come from the first section of Nifo's work (the section on the opinions of others: "aliorum sententia"), in which fourteen anonymous views are first presented on the superiority of letters, followed by four anonymous views on the superiority of arms (see above p.160). Brucioli borrows all four views on arms and ten of the fourteen on letters. From the opinions which Nifo assigns to particular individuals or groups of individuals (Cicero and the doctors of law, Petrarch, the Romans, the followers of Sallust, and other Peripatetics and Platonists - see above p.161ff), Brucioli only takes the short passage quoted above on knights and doctors. From the central part, the body of Nifo's work, Brucioli translates fairly faithfully and extensively the definition of arms (see above p.169); he leaves aside the decree in favour of the superiority of arms but pinches a couple of snippets from its proofs on the basis of the definition of happiness and of the definition of honesty

(see above p.172). The definition of letters (see above p.154) and the long section on the desirable alliance of arms and letters is left unused (see above p.158ff) and so is the entire third section of the Comentariolus (see above p.163), except for the first counter-argument to the initial argument in favour of letters. Brucioli seems at least therefore to have skimmed through the whole text, but in the last resort to have taken only what was most convenient and less demanding. Had there been an equal number of arguments supporting both arms and letters in the first section, he might not have bothered to read any further. But as there was a decided imbalance in favour of letters, he needed to search for more points in defence of arms; and indeed the passages he translated from the second and third sections of Nifo's treatise, are passages which all support arms. It was thus a quick job he intended to do. He also left out the countless quotations which Nifo had woven into his discussion. This was presumably so as to lend more vivacity to the dialogue, but it was only partly successful, for Brucioli seems on the whole to have given little thought to producing an impression of fluency. His dialogue is only a real dialogue, with the speakers actually listening to one another and answering accordingly, for about the first half; after that it becomes a dialogue de sourds, in which repartee follows repartee without much rhyme or reason. Brucioli was aware of this shortcoming of his text and he tried to put an excuse for it in the mouth of Letters: "noi non vogliamo le vostre ragioni anullare confutandole- they say to Arms - acciò che più dolce sia fra noi questa contesa, ma bene dimostrare quello che è"(pp.33v°-34r°). Having said this, Letters no longer pay much attention to what Arms say, and Arms for their part hardly bother any longer to listen to what Letters have to say. This of course leads them nowhere, and in the end they find themselves obliged to submit the case for arbitration to a third party. In the first edition the arbiter - who, it has been stipulated, must be an expert

in both arms and letters - is none else than Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi, the dedicatee of that edition, and in the Dialogi faceti of 1538 he is the brother of the dedicatee, Duke Ercole II. This is the only important variant between the two editions.

In the 1529 conclusion of their dialogue, Arms say to Letters:

non molto lontano di qua, nella nobilissima città di Firenze, vive un valoroso spirto, il quale et noi et voi honora et cole. Et perché già è chi per altro in alcuni suoi dialogi a lui vi invia, non sapendo a chi meglio le sue compositioni mandare et insieme le honorate discipline vostre, a questo anchora noi rapresentare ci vogliamo et a quello rimettere tanta nostra lite, sapendo quanto et di voi et di noi sia amatore et a dentro ne intenda (p.226r°).

Many of Brucioli's dedications have this kind of ambiguity which one could take to imply that the dedicatee was selected faute de mieux. In the dedication for instance of Book II of the first edition to young Francesco d'Este Brucioli wrote; "essendo per mandare fuore alcuni miei Dialogi, più volte ho meco medesimo pensato, a chi (come conveniente dono) mandare gli potessi, et mentre che l'animo non bene resoluto andava cercando dove potergli più acconciamente posare, veggendo quasi tutto il mondo volto alle armi et nessuno tenere più conto della Santa Philosophia, mi occorse la S.V.." This must have been a formula which Brucioli found particularly convenient, for it is repeated almost word for word in the dedication of the Dialogi della naturale philosophia to Don Iulio Feltrio in 1537.[17] But behind the conventional facade we do probably detect the determination of the author to retain some degree of independence and self-respect in the humiliating task of soliciting protection. The humiliation (and consequently the self-respect) is at its most intense in the dedication to Cardinal Ottaviano de'Medici of the first book of the last edition, in which Brucioli does not in fact so much request patronage as demand gratitude for the patronage which he, Brucioli, is bestowing upon Ottaviano by associating his name with

this work of literature. Men, Brucioli begins, are different from other animals in two respects: they have the use of reason and speech, and they may enjoy everlasting fame after their death.

Et questa seconda non può succedere a alcuno senza gli scritti che restino a fare fede della egregia virtù et valore di quegli che sono degni delle loro lode, i quali non solamente gli fanno illustri et notandi appo i posteri, ma in gran benevolentia adducano essi et i loro descendenti, tale che bene spesso grandissime commodità ne conseguono. ... Grande è stata certo et illustrissima la famiglia de Medeci, ma non pensate che a sí alto grido et fama sua non giovassino assai i Marsili Ficini, gli Angeli Politiani, i Pontani, i Platini et più altri simili scrittori, che a quegli dedicorno l'opere loro, inalzando et magnificando la magnanimità et liberalità di tanti illustri huomini. Et se si potessi vederne il vero, questi poterono assai a indurre gli animi degli imperadori, papi, re et gran signori et de popoli a essere favorevoli a tanto celebrata casa, talmente che ne pervenne a sommi gradi della dignità.

If this, as Dionisotti has suggested (see above p.178), is the last politic dedication of the Dialogi, the choice of words is certainly not the most felicitous to that effect, and Brucioli must already have been having second thoughts about the expediency of flattering important personalities and in particular the offspring of a family to whom economic circumstances had forced him to betray his former friends. But at other times and in earlier days Brucioli knew how to be perfectly obsequious. This is how he appears in the close of the 1538 version of the Dialogo della preminentia dell'armi et delle lettere. He no doubt expected more from the Estensi than he had done from Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi and the latter's praises of 1529 are replaced in 1538 by three times as many compliments for the Estensi and Duke Ercole in particular,

un nuovo Hercule ... il quale, a prieghi della afflitta Italia, come altra volta già fece Giove, di nuovo l'ha rimandato in terra a opporsi col suo sapere et valore a quelle efferate fiere rapaci, che infino al vivo tutta lacerare la vorrieno; il quale, doppo che un tempo harà retta quella parte che dal suo padre Giove gli è stata data in governo, con grande honore et gloria della casa Estense, libererà il resto di quella dalla dura sua servitù. Siché anchora noi contente siamo di tanto honorato giudice, il valore et la prudentia del quale è tanta grande, che l'armento che ne campi Italiani è commesso alla sua guardia, sicuro tiene in mezzo di molti

lupi, che in forma di pastori lacerare lo voriano, nessuno lasciando entrare nel suo ovile (p.39r°).

In reality of course it is the reader who is to be the judge of the dispute, for Arms and Letters wander off hand in hand leaving him to guess what the outcome is to be. Neither has won the day, but neither was intended to, for the purpose of the exercise had not really been to find a solution but more to enjoy a conversation: "venute siamo a trovarvi, perché noi vogliamo tutto questo giorno, piacendovi, spenderlo in ragionare con esso voi della preminentia et degnità vostra et nostra" Arms had said to Letters at the beginning (p.32v°). The querelle has now decidedly become a jeu de société, having moved from the classrooms of jurists and schoolmen and the battlefields, as it were, of southern Italy to the courts and salons of the north. In Brucioli the jocose and superficial tone is set at the very outset in a small scene in which Arms play the part of a courteous but determined seducer, and Letters of a bashful virgin, reacting to the request of Arms like Mozart's Zerlina to the advances of Don Giovanni ("vorrei e non vorrei ..."). When, having lost patience, Arms become more menacing, Letters finally succumb: "noi siamo contente di dire quello che di nostra degnità a comparatione della vostra ne paia et vivacemente con le ragioni difenderemo la causa nostra" (p.33v°).

The first argument of Letters, as we have seen, is that they are a gift of the mind, whereas arms pertain to the body and are subject to the whims of fortune; to which Arms reply that, as a matter of fact, they are a function of both body and mind, and of the mind in particular through the virtue of fortitude ("fortezza") which is especially connected with the art of war, and that they are thus superior to letters, being an expression of man in his totality. Moreover arms bring about most wondrous effects, such as fortitude magnanimity and justice (the supreme virtue), and they are the cause of wealth too, thanks to which men are able to study in peace and quiet. Letters on the other hand, if they cause good effects, do so only by accident: one can understand what virtue is,

without necessarily being virtuous. But Letters are of the opinion that it is they who generate what is best: friendship and the contemplation and fruition of the summum bonum. Arms turn man against man and bring about only death and destruction. Naturally Arms do not agree. It is thanks to them that men and states are maintained in liberty; contemplation only corrupts. God and the superior intelligences - Letters retort - are said to be blessed precisely because they know and contemplate themselves, and so too is man blessed, in imitation of God. But God, say Arms (since you chose to rise so high), is both wise and mighty and it is with his might and not his wisdom that he rules creation, and likewise rule princes the world. Arms are therefore superior to letters, for the real cause is the one that does, not the one that advises. It is at this stage that the dialogue loses any semblance of logic and that argument starts to follow upon argument without apparent rhyme or reason, often becoming repetitive. Without military science ("disciplina militare"), which is learnt from letters, arms are bestial and incapable of winning victories and victories are arms' only avenue to praise. Whatever excellence arms thus achieve, they owe to letters. Arms though encourage man and train him for the active and civic life ("civili attioni et tutte le altre operationi"), whereas too much studying is an obstacle and bar to that life. A man-of-letters ("huomo litterato") however is as different from an uneducated one ("ignorante") as is a portrait or a sculpture from a man of flesh and blood. Letters in other words are the essence of man and what is more, by perfecting his reason and intellect, they render him truly divine, where arms but turn him into a brute. All beasts have natural means of defence (horns, teeth, claws etc.) but to man alone nature gave reason. Is not he who does well - Arms now ask - preferable to him who only teaches to do well? If he is, then, as we have seen, knights are superior to doctors. But it is only through the agency of letters that a man, a warrior, can still be famous thousands and thousands of years after his death: letters thus bring immortality to arms. And arms

bring immortality to letters, for where would letters be if there were no glorious deeds of which to sing? And in any case, if you have committed a valorous deed, it is sufficient for your conscience and God to know of it. Neither of the contestants will yet concede victory, so Letters continue by claiming that those who have a strong intellect are natural leaders, whereas those who have but a strong body must naturally obey. Arms however do not mean just weapons, is the inconsequential reply of Arms, which allows them to reel off Nifo's definition. Running short of arguments, Letters reiterate that man alone was born to friendship and that he alone was given reason and intellect by nature, all of which are perfected by means of letters. Letters are thus superior to arms as substance is to accident. Such distinctions are too subtle for Arms ("noi non vi sappiamo tanto dire di sustantie o d'accidenti") and they retort once again that glory nobility honour power riches and virtue are gifts of arms all and every one. Innumerable are the men who, from poverty and humbleness, rose to fame and glory with the help of arms; but there is not one who did so with the help of letters. Finally Letters argue at length that it was arms who put an end to the Golden Age and are therefore the cause of the present miseries of humankind. But Arms succeed in turning the same argument against Letters, and the offices of an impartial adjudicator thus become indispensible.

This is what the reader will find in Brucioli's Dialogo della preminentia delle armi et delle lettere (and in Nifo's Comentariolus). Amidst so much drudgery, there are moments where the author manages to strike a more personal note, not necessarily very original, but different from Nifo and perhaps more sincere. The most heartfelt innovation is the lament for the loss of the Golden Age, a passage which takes up at least one third of the whole dialogue. The arguments used on either side may differ, but the intent is the same: the peace of the world has been upset, man has lost his innocence, love and harmony

have given way to violence and discord. The plea of Letters is impassioned: "et chi fu quello, che mescolassi e confondessi tutte le cose, una tanto lieta et felice pace turbando, se non lo insolente furore dell'armi, per la alterigia e insolentia delle quali niente sicuro o lieto rimane al mondo, per voi più volte venuto pieno di lamenti e dolorose strida per lo efferato spargimento dell'humano sangue" (p.37r°). The countercharge of Arms is more pointed: "da queste vostre lettere grammaticali vengono le pistole amatorie, corrompitrici dell'honestà delle giovani, turbatrici de casti matrimonii e spesso anchora de costumi de teneri giovanetti. Et oltre a questo, quante lascivie, quante obscenità, quanti inganni, quanti strupi, quante ruberie, quante iniquità, quante malignità s'imparono ne vostri scritti, vadinsi pure a vedere i corruttibili poeti, di lascivia e falsità pieni" (p.38r°). Rhetoric daily incites princes to wage war and is thus more responsible for spilling human blood than arms are. Law with all its trickeries makes black of white and turns friends into enemies. Because of dialectics and philosophy "col Tomista pugna lo Scotista, col Reale il Nominale", and theology is the cause of more heresies than arms manage to put down, not to mention all the frauds, charms and spells cast by letters. Letters are therefore just as responsible as arms for the fall of man. It would be rash of course to attribute this excursus on the Golden Age, without further proof, to the disillusion of a man twice exiled from his native city, who knew his country to be at the bloodstained hands of "barbarians" and who was aware of the conflicts taking place all around him in the name of religion, but this is the kind of thing which cannot be proven and must therefore remain at the stage of plausible hypothesis. But plausible it certainly is for, as we have pointed out, this argument takes up a good third of the dialogue and it is by far its liveliest and most sincere sounding section. It is true that it is an argument which we also find in Nifo ("Arma postponenda esse Literis, quia perverterint auream aetatem ac

libidinosa sint")[18], but Brucioli has expanded it beyond recognition and in Nifo it is just one of many "scholastic" arguments (Nifo's reply to it is that arms only vitiated the Golden Age "per accidens", for in themselves they are not bad and were invented for good purposes, but it is man in his wickedness who has debased them), whereas in Brucioli it takes on a special significance, both by its dimensions and by its position at the end of the dialogue. and also because it is the one point on which both Arms and Letters agree. They may have different views as to who the culprits were, but that paradise is lost neither of them deny. There is another argument in the Dialogo with a similar ring, for which Brucioli also took his cue from the Comentariolus ("est amicitia homini maxime propria")[19], but which he also chose to develop at greater length (though by no means at such great length as the discussion on the Golden Age), thereby giving it the sanction of more personal feelings. Man alone of all animals was born to friendship, wherefore he alone was created of pleasant countenance, was given charming eyes, the possibility to hug and kiss, laughter and tears to express his feelings, speech to voice his sentiments and, to top it all, the use of reason and intellect, which only letters can perfect. True, none of this is terribly original and it is more than likely that Brucioli pilfered it from somebody else (Cicero perhaps?) - once found guilty of theft, it is hard to make believe that you can be innocent - but it is not in Nifo. Brucioli must therefore have paused to reflect at this stage of his hurried translation, in order to emphasize a point which he deemed worthy of especial attention. A further passage which is not in the Comentariolus is the reply which Arms give to the claim of Letters that it is they who are the agents of immortality. Nifo had himself countered this argument in the third section of his work but in a way too pedantic to be included in a sociable dialogue, and also perhaps in a way not easily translatable into Italian, as it quibbled with the meaning of a word. "Literas Armis praestabiliores

esse, quia Armis nulla insit praestantia, nisi quam Literae ipsis tribuerint" had been Nifo's argument, [20] to which his counter-argument was that, just as gold is more noble than other metals yet anyone who says so does not bring that superiority ("praestantiam") into being but simply praises it, so anyone who writes of Caesar is simply praising him but is not conferring upon him the worth which he already has of himself. [21] Brucioli opted for a simpler retort: that it is arms which bring immortality to letters by providing them with an interesting subject-matter to write about. Ludovico da Canossa, it will be remembered, uses a similar argument in the Cortegiano: "i scritti, li quali forse non sariano tanto letti né apprezzati se mancasse loro il nobile suggetto, ma vani e di poco momento." [22] The Cortegiano had appeared for the first time, in Venice, the year preceding the publication of Brucioli's Dialogo of Arms and Letters, and it is not improbable that Ludovico da Canossa's repartee is what gave Brucioli his inspiration (indeed the Cortegiano might well have given currency and helped to create the vogue for a vernacular querelle of Arms and Letters and thus have been the original impetus behind Brucioli's rushed plagiarism, which sought perhaps to satisfy a burgeoning demand), but we need not rob him of all originality, and certainly the final touch of the reply of Arms seems to reflect more personal preoccupations of the author. Arms add that in any case it is sufficient, if one has committed a good deed, for God and one's conscience to know about it. This sounds strangely out of place in an otherwise relentlessly boastful mouth and it could well be the reflection of a man under the spell of the Reformation, as Brucioli was. But even without this, we know from the dedication to Ottaviano de' Medici that the question of the bond between the singer and the sung was a problem of particular concern to Brucioli. Brucioli's final innovation with respect to the Comentariolus is the inclusion of a rather garbled passage on the virtue of riches, which only arms can empower man to acquire:

cosí per noi Armi s'acquistano le gran ricchezze, per lequali, oltre alla fortitudine e magnanimità, si conseguono tante mirabili virtù, quante voi potete comprendere, senza che, per esse ricchezze dalla virtù e valore nostro acquistato, possono anchora venire gli huomini studiosi e litterati e negli alti studii felicemente quietare l'intelletto, là dove la vostra felicità ponete, conciosiacosaché nulla si possa senza questi negli honorati studii operare, perché, come il vostro Aristotile pone, un perfetto mezo sono a far che l'huomo pervenga a essa felicità (p.33v°).

Here too Brucioli could have taken his cue from Nifo; but if he did, he misunderstood what he had read or chose to understand it in his own way. This passage is quite a faithful reproduction of Nifo's first argument in defence of arms ("Arma praeferenda esse Literis, quia ipsa sint per se ut bene vivamus; Literae vero per se nec ut bene vivamus, nec boni fiamus")[23]. It is only in the middle that Brucioli strays from the text of the Comentariolus, where it says: "patet igitur ex hisce, Arma facultates esse, quibus tum fortitudo tum magnanimitas acquiritur. Insuper facultates esse, quibus homines studiosi et fortitudinis et magnanimitatis opera emoliuntur."[24] To lend weight to his awkward departure from the original, Brucioli for the first and only time avowedly enlists the support of an authority, Aristotle. The departure it is true is not very significant, but if we are looking for a personal motivation behind it, we could well say that it is the reflection of a man who, from bitter experience, knew only too well that "nulla si possa senza questi negli honorati studii operare." He had already wandered through Europe in search of profitable employment and for the rest of his life he would in vain be soliciting lucrative protection.

When all is said and done, these personal touches do not amount to very much. Reflect more intimate preoccupations of Brucioli they may well do, but they never succeed in lifting the dialogue above the tone of gentle badinage. Just as the discussion was becoming more earnest, it is interrupted by Arms, who bring it back to the level of polite entertainment which had been set in the opening scene by saying "non volendo che sia altro fra noi che pace

e amicitia, ci pare che si debba, per non ci offendere, lasciare questa contesa e rimettere ad altri tanta lite" (p.38v°). Brucioli's Dialogo, as we have said, was a hurried job, to which he committed his pen but not his heart. It did not really arouse his interest. This is especially clear if we bear in mind that all serious discussion about arms and letters - the relationship between might and right, between the law and the military, the importance of education and so on - he reserves to other dialogues ("Del modo dello instruire i figliuoli", "Della republica", "Delle leggi della republica", "Del capitano", to mention but a few) and even to simple dedications (see the dedication to Francesco d'Este p.183 above). For him the querelle has become a set piece, a genre with its own rules, and a game to be played without regard for the reality of the world outside but only for the conventions established by literary precedent. Of course there had always been a degree of conventionality in the debate - especially when its terms were knights and doctors - and literary precedents had always had their part to play, but never before had the querelle been so totally divorced from any social context and so thoroughly derivative. The address to Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi and the later one to Ercole II d'Este do not constitute a social context. Rather, they re-inforce the impression of estrangement from reality, as the dedicatees are invited to participate in an entertainment which remains unchanged whether it is meant for bourgeois Florence or aristocratic Ferrara. And in the 1538 edition the reader is clearly made to understand that what he is about to read he should not take too seriously. The title of the fifth book, in which the dialogue of Arms and Letters appears, is Dialogi faceti, and in the dedication of that book Brucioli says to Alphonso d'Este: "volendo io mandare a vedere quello che i vulgari italiani sentino di queste mie puerili fatiche, più fatte per recrearne gli animi di quegli, che le severe sententie degli altri quattro libri haranno lette, che per utilità che esse apportino ne loro scritti." This could be the false modesty of a

Petrarch towards his so-called nugellae, but the reader would undoubtedly be hard put to find much that is useful in the Dialogo della preminentia delle armi et delle lettere.

Not all the contributions to the querelle written in the years and decades following the publication of Brucioli's Dialogi will be quite as derivative as his dialogue of Arms and Letters and none so totally out of any social context, but all will be in the vernacular, not a few in dialogue form and most in the style of genteel entertainment. The pattern of the genre is now firmly set, with arms and letters squarely in the lead (though knights and doctors never far behind), producing mostly unimaginative variations on an often monotonous theme.

B. Isabella Andreini: Amoroso contrasto sopra le armi e le lettere.

By the turn of the century very little had changed. In 1625 some Fragmenti di alcune scritture of the comédienne and authoress Isabella Canali Andreini were published in Venice, twenty-one years after her death. They had been collected in memory of her by her actor husband Francesco Andreini, whose introduction to the work ("A' Benigni Lettori") is dated April 28th 1616, from Mantua.[25] They consist of thirty-one dialogues in the form of small tableaux ("contrasti scenici") the sixth of which is an Amoroso contrasto sopra le armi e le lettere. Brucioli, as we have seen, had already dramatised the querelle and turned it into a kind of love scene. At the hands of Isabella Andreini both these aspects are developed more thoroughly and consistently. Arms and letters are personified, arms as a manly and gallant though none too witted Capitano Alessandro, "il cui valore avanza il valore di quel Magno, del quale degnamente portate il nome" (p.41), and letters as a beautiful bright and determined Signora Corinna, "la cui sapienza supera il sapere di quella famosa Greca, della quale meritamente porta il nome" (p.41). She is no longer the bashful virgin of Brucioli's dialogue who blushes at the advances of her suitor; it is she who now does the proposing and she can stand up for her rights and defend them like Bradamante, even though she may prefer to see herself as Isabella facing Rodomonte (Alessandro however has nothing of the wicked braggadocio of Ariosto's hero). Isabella Andreini has also given more sprightliness to the dramatisation of the confrontation; not that her dialogue can by any means be said to convey much excitement and suspense, but it does have that je ne sais quoi which makes it more entertaining than Brucioli's dialogue and which we may attribute to a lifetime on and back-stage. The je ne sais quoi is probably no more than brevity (her dialogue is not even half as long as Brucioli's and her

actors do not beat about the bush), but it does have an air of continuity and finality which is lacking in Brucioli. This is provided first of all by more theatrical repartee - there is even the odd aside to the "audience" - and by the fact that the debate is subsumed to the resolution of a love story: will he or will he not love her as she loves him! The dialogue is also much more of a real dialogue than it is in Brucioli. The speakers actually do listen to what the other has to say, though often their riposte is not by way of counterargument, but is simply an attempt to outwit the opponent, to say something cleverer or more to the point.

The scene opens with Corinna "walking on stage" to greet Alessandro, who in turn greets her and pays her compliments. If these compliments corresponded to reality, she answers, then her only desire would be, by means of her wisdom ("sapere") and writings ("scrivere"), to render Alessandro immortal. But Alessandro courteously declines the generous offer, for he is already immortal, "essendo, come io sono, Capitano d'essercito di soldati a piede e a cavallo" (p.41). The challenge is thus delivered and the duel may begin. After a few moments Corinna interrupts it to say that they must proceed in more orderly a manner, but first agree on certain terms: "adagio Signor Capitano, mettiamo la contesa nostra in termine e poi vi diremo sopra. Ma bisogna prima, che occorra alcun patto come occorse tra Rodomonte e Isabella tra di noi, accioché, s'io perdo, mi tocchi a star di sotto e a voi di sopra come vincente" (p.42). The pact is that, if Alessandro loses, he will be obliged to love Corinna as she loves him, but if he wins, he will have complete power to do with her whatever he chooses. And so the duel proceeds with each contestant in turn gaining the upper hand and then being beaten back until they both concede, since neither can be the victor and neither defeated, that they must love and respect one another. Says Alessandro to Corinna: "Signora Corinna, io non

voglio far torto né all'una né all'altra honoratissima professione, le quali, come dianzi dissi, hanno l'una dell'altra bisogno, non potendosi l'una senza l'altra mantenere; e perché la nostra questione rimane del pari, mi contento d'amarvi, accioché del pari vadano gli amori nostri e che pari sieno i piaceri, i diletti e gli amorosi contenti" (p.48). All is thus well that ends well and, as in Brucioli, Corinna and Alessandro walk off friends and lovers hand in hand.

The language of love in this Contrasto amoroso, the language of courtship, is taken from the chivalric world of jousts and duels. Corinna (in an aside to the "audience") describes Alessandro as "forte, robusto, gagliardo e di buon nervo" (p.44), and he thanks her for her "larga cortesia" (p.42). They agree, as we have seen, on a "patto" in their "contesa", in which the loser will be he who "sta di sotto". When Corinna delivers a blow which Alessandro finds it hard to parry, he whispers to the "audience": "costei comincia a farmi toccar le corde dello steccato, onde bisogna rincalzarla gagliardamente e abbatterla" (p.44). When it is Corinna's turn to be on the defensive, she refuses to "arrendersi" and swears that it will be Alessandro who will have to "piegar l'asta" and having struck back, she exclaims triumphantly: "qui bisogna un gran scanso di vita, a fuggir questa punta, Signor Capitano" (p.45). But she is unable to unhorse Alessandro who retorts: "Signora mia, parate ben con la vostra rotella questa imbroccata" (p.46). When Alessandro at last shows signs of flinching, Corinna goads him on with the following words: "alla fé, Signor Capitano, che voi cominciate a lenare, a diventar pigro e lento nel menar delle mani, e io all'incontro mi sento più fresca e più gagliarda nel fine che nel principio" (p.47). And Alessandro's final "surrender" is as chivalrous as one could have wished. Of course there is nothing exceptional in the language of war and the language of love being one and the same; but what it does reveal in this instance is the type of audience

at which Isabella Andreini's Amoroso contrasto was addressed. It is a form of aristocratic entertainment intended for the self same people who whiled away their time watching or taking part in jousts and duels, courtiers for whom the whole world was the stage of theatrically contrived situations. Having spent a lifetime entertaining the aristocracies of northern Italy and France, Isabella Andreini was presumably familiar with their tastes and her Contrasti scenici are likely to reflect what was popular with them.[26] Certainly there is a great deal which is conventional about her Amoroso contrasto sopra le armi e le lettere and many of her arguments have an implied air of déjà vu, for in their brevity they do not make much sense unless they presuppose a certain amount of familiarity and knowledge on behalf of the audience. Such for instance are the opening words of the dialogue which rehearse, incompletely, the familiar argument about who brings immortality to whom. There is in fact not one original argument in the whole of the Amoroso contrasto. Most we have encountered already and others, we will see, became popular in the course of the sixteenth century.

Germane to the argument from immortality are several other arguments of the "who-needs-whom" type, be it letterati who to study need the peace and quiet which only soldati can provide, or laws which are ineffective without the backing of the sword, or soldiers who without the succour of learning would fight irrationally, endlessly and chaotically. The compromise is that arms and letters have need of one another, "conciosiaché per l'armi si difendono e s'amplificano le cittadi e i regni e per le lettere si governano e si conservano" (p.47). Akin to this are the arguments concerning the respective utility of the two professions. Laws are of universal benefit, whereas arms minister to the ambitions of a single prince or state while doing immeasurable harm to their enemies. On the other hand a soldier who exposes his

life for the commonweal ("patria") is more useful than the man-of-letters who "sé ne vive sepolto ne suoi volumi" (p.43). Then there is the argument about which of arms and letters are more natural. Arms are natural, for all living beings have been endowed with natural means of defence, whereas letters are artificial ("artificiose"). Yet arms are the cause of death and destruction and are thus contrary to human happiness, whereas letters, which are the agents of virtue, lead man to his appointed felicity in this world and the next (knowledge and contemplation), being a function of the mind where arms are but a function of the body. Arms moreover are subject to the whims of fortune. Arguments which became popular in the course of the sixteenth century, are the ones about the origins of arms and letters (arms are more noble because they were invented in heaven before the creation of man; letters were invented later, on earth) and about the titles which the two professions confer upon their practicians:

quella professione è più eccellente, che al suo professore acquista titoli più eccellenti. Uno che attenda alle lettere, per molto studio che vi faccia, se non s'addottora, non acquista titolo alcuno; e se si addottora, acquista nome d'Eccellente; e se publicamente segue leggendo a lettura principale una quantità d'anni, acquista nome d'Illustre, e questo è il maggior titolo del letterato. Ma il professor della militia acquista subito nome di strenuo, et s'è soldato a piedi, che è il men degno grado della militia, in dieci anni si fa nobile; e s'è huomo d'arme, in meno. Ad un Capitano o Colonello d'huomini d'arme, si dà dell'Illustre, et a un Generale da Mare o da Terra si dà dell'Eccellentissimo (pp.45-6).

This point, which derives ultimately from the scholastic axiom which has been common to the whole querelle in its various manifestations, that "nomina sunt consequentia rerum", is an interesting reflection on the linguistic usages and social customs of the time. It is often associated with another argument we also find in Andreini, namely that dottori are superior to cavalieri, because it takes five to six years of hard labour to become a doctor, where a hundred knights can be created in an instant.

Except for the interesting innovations (in respect of what we have studied so far) of *letterato* and *soldato*, which, as we shall see, became slowly established in the course of the sixteenth century, the terminology too in Andreini's *Contrasto* is very conventional. It is so conventional in fact that it has lost any real meaning. *Letterato* and *dottore*, *leggi* and *lettere*, *soldati*, *cavalieri* and *militia* are used indifferently. There are still traces perhaps of the Knight and Doctor querelle - in particular when the instantaneous knighthood is unfavourably compared with the hard-won doctorhood - but on the whole a *dottore* is the equivalent of a *letterato* and it is no longer only a student of law who *s'addottora*. In all their vagueness arms and letters may well stand for two different professions, but their language and their behaviour (the language and behaviour of Corinna and Alessandro that is) show them to belong to the same world. They are no longer rivals from different social groups, as we had in the Knight and Doctor querelle and in the early stages of the querelle of Arms and Letters, but friends with different interests from the same social environment. And if Isabella Andreini's *Amoroso contrasto* has any significance at all, it is as a witness to the enduring popularity of the querelle on the one hand, but more particularly as a witness to the social acceptability of the partnership of arms and letters. It cannot even be said to be *advocating* the alliance of arms and letters (it has none of the propagandism of, say, Nifo's *Comentariolus*): it simply records a reality. "Tanto l'una professione ha bisogno dell'altra, che l'una senza l'altra essercitar non si può giustamente, e l'altra senza l'una mantener non si può sicuramente" (p.47).

We should be careful of course not to take this single instance as proof that the kind of conflict reflected in the works of Lapo da Castiglionchio, Galateo or Nifo was definitely a thing of the past. Other literary evidence, more or less contemporary with Andreini's *Contrasti scenici*, Traiano Boccalini's *Ragguagli di Parnaso*,

suggests that indeed it was not.[27] The seventy-fifth Ragguaglio of the first Century says that "con animi ostinatissimi si tratta ancora in Parnaso tra i Letterati e gli huomini Militari la maggioranza tra le Armi e le Lettere" (p.319). The men-of-arms ("huomini militari") submit to the Ruota di Parnaso that their profession (the "essercitio della guerra") should be recognized as a science and a discipline. After much deliberating the Ruota accedes to their request, whereupon all the butchers of the universe come rushing forth with a similar petition:

essendo alla notitia loro pervenuto, che la Ruota di Parnaso haveva deciso che l'arte di saccheggiare e abbrucciar le città, di tagliare a pezzi gli habitatori di esse, e in somma, che il mestier crudelissimo di macellar gli huomini, di disertare il mondo e di far con la spada in mano del mio tuo, si chiamasse scienza e disciplina, ancor'essi, che non la carne de gli huomini per spegnere il genere humano, ma le vitelle mongane macellavano per pascer le genti, domandavano che co' medesimi illustrissimi nomi fosse honorata l'arte loro (p.320).

The Auditors of the Ruota are thus shamed into debating the matter over again and into revoking their original sentence. Their final decision is that "il mestiere della guerra, ancor che molte volte necessario, era però tanto fiero, tant'inhumano, che non era possibile cohonestarlo con le belle parole" (p.321). This satire is of course just as much a reflection on the literary genre itself (on the comicality to which convention had reduced it) as it is on the pretensions of men-of-arms, but it does suggest that all was not always as well between the two professions as Andreini had pictured it to be. At the same time it is further evidence of how popular the querelle still was.

It would be interesting to know whether its popularity was such that it was ever adapted for the stage. Andreini, as we have seen, made of it a Contrasto scenico. We have no evidence to suggest that this was ever performed, but it may well have been a summary plot or outline intended for the use of comici dell'arte, such for instance as the company of Gelosi to which Andreini belonged for most of her career after having joined it in Bologna in

1576. The director of the company was Flamminio Scala and his Teatro delle favole rappresentative, overo la ricreatione comica, boscareccia e tragica is a codification of scenarios for the use precisely of comici dell'arte.[28] The fourteenth of his fifty scenarios is that of a comedy entitled Il pellegrino fido amante. Its plot is unexceptional:Pantalone wants to marry off his daughter Flaminia; she has two suitors, "Oratio gentilhuomo" and the "Capitano Spavento", and she favours Oratio, whereas her father prefers the Capitano. After much discussion and after having sought the opinion of various other characters, her father finally obliges her to accept the hand of the Capitano. What is interesting for our purposes in this plot is that Oratio is a letterato and the Capitano a milite and that the central scene is sketched out by Scala in the following words: "Pantalone dice a Flaminia sua figlia volerla maritare e contentarla e che sopra di ciò dica l'animo suo. Ella che vorrebbe un letterato, Pantalone che vorrebbe darla ad un milite nobile, adducono molte ragioni sopra le professioni." The final judge on the matter is Pedrolino, the servant of Capitano Spavento, who says that "ogni donna doverrebbe amar' un milite e non un letterato".[29] The approach here reminds one of the medieval Knight and Clerk debate which, as we shall be seeing in our final chapter, weighed the relative merits of knights and clerics as lovers, but this debate was long forgotten and the way the actors filled out the plot must have had more in common with our querelle than with anything else, and, who knows, they probably got some ideas from Isabella Andreini. We cannot say whether she herself might ever have played the part of Flaminia in this comedy - she usually took the role of Isabella - but her husband Francesco Andreini, was always cast as Capitano Spavento. That is the way in fact in which he is described in the title of the edition of his wife's Fragmenti di alcune scritture, the editor of which was the very Flamminio Scala himself.[30] It is not unlikely therefore that arms and letters did appear on stage and that Isabella's Amoroso contrasto was in some

way connected with theatrical performances of the querelle. But whether or not it was, it is quite clear that Andreini's version of the querelle was no more than an entertainment. Andreini however was no innovator, for it had already become so in Brucioli's day and such it had remained throughout the sixteenth century.

The change which took place in the nature of the querelle in the early decades of the sixteenth century, from serious discussion to light entertainment, was not of course occasioned by the publication of Brucioli's Dialogo which was but a symptom of the transformation of the genre. The mere fact that it was not published a third time when all of Brucioli's other dialoges were, would seem to indicate quite clearly that it was never very popular, and we certainly have no indication that it was known to other authors on the subject. Everything suggests that it was written hurriedly and in response to a particular demand. The question thus needs to be answered as to why this demand arose and why the querelle changed when it did.

The early sixteenth century was of course the beginning of a new era in Italian literature, the era par excellence of the vernacular, when convention and imitation became the norm and the dialogue the most acceptable, not to say the only accepted form of prose writing. It is hardly surprising therefore to find Brucioli writing a dialogue of Arms and Letters, "nella materna lingua" and "in imitation" of an earlier Latin text. The querelle of Arms and Letters moreover, and of the Knight and Doctor, had already been in the air without interruption for a very long time and its popularity was undoubtedly much greater than we are able to ascertain at this stage from the known literary evidence; indeed we have had intimations from this very evidence of its popularity in the oral tradition too. When the time was ripe therefore it became one of many commonplaces to be adapted to the conventions of a new type of literature and the demands of an enlarged reading public in search

of entertainment. A particular model might well have been Ilicino's version of the querelle, which was written in the vernacular, in quasi-dialogue form, had been in circulation since the 1470's and was to remain so well into the 1520's. Ilicino, as we have seen, was widely read and had influenced both Galateo and Nifo (thus finding his way unwittingly into Brucioli's dialogue); and even after the last edition of his commentary in 1522 he was to continue being quoted in the context of the genre. Another theme which had been popular since the early days of the Renaissance, and which is similar to, though not identical with the querelle (although it had on many occasions also become associated with it) was the debate on the educative necessity of combining arms and letters, the physical and the mental, for the formation of the perfect man. This debate had received a boost in more recent years with the circulation and publication of the Cortegiano, whose "principale e vera profession" was to be "quella dell'arme"(I,xvii) and for whom "oltre alla bontà, il vero e principal ornamento dell'animo" were to be "le lettere" (I,xlii). The Libro del cortegiano, the popularity of which is too well known to need recalling, must also have given renewed vigour to the very querelle itself, for one of its more lively moments is a discussion between Pietro Bembo and Ludovico da Canossa on the relative merits precisely of arms and letters. This discussion, which comes at the climax of the long passage on the importance of literary qualifications, is not simply the logical conclusion of that passage but it is its conclusion so contrived as to allow for the inclusion in the text of the querelle of Arms and Letters in well tried terms.

The actual querelle takes up very little space in the Cortegiano: only two short chapters (I, 45-6). And it only really consists of two arguments, the mind/body argument and a version of the who-needs-whom/immortality argument. Pietro Bembo, in reply to Ludovico da Canossa's claim that arms are the "principal professione"

of the courtier and "l'altre bone condizioni tutte... ornamento di quelle", says that surely letters, being a function of the mind, must be "di dignità all'arme superiori", which are but a function of the body. Ludovico da Canossa's answer to this is the familiar "anzi all'animo ed al corpo appartien la operazion dell'arme." Then, commenting on Petrarch's "Giunto Alessandro alla famosa tomba" which Bembo had adduced as further evidence for the superiority of letters, Canossa says:

basta che i litterati quasi mai non pigliano a laudare se non omini grandi e fatti gloriosi, i quali da sé meritano laude per la propria essenzial virtute donde nascono; oltre a ciò sono nobilissima materia dei scrittori; il che è grande ornamento ed in parte causa di perpetuare i scritti, li quali forse non sariano tanto letti né apprezzati se mancasse loro il nobile suggetto, ma vani e di poco momento (I,xlvi).

The reason Canossa had given for not wanting to discuss this question at too great a length was that it had already received much attention from other people: "essendo già stata questa disputazione lungamente agitata da omini sapientissimi, non è bisogno rinovarla." Since the relationship between arms and letters, between the two professions of the courtier, is the very dilemma of the courtier's existence and the very crux of his quest for an identity (does he exist to fight or to converse? Is his purpose to serve his prince on the battlefield or in the council-chamber?), it may seem surprising that Canossa should show so little eagerness to argue the question any further at this stage. But he realized (Castiglione realized) that "questa disputazione", i.e. the querelle of Arms and Letters, was not relevant to the wider debate about the raison d'être of the courtier, that it had become too rigid to allow for a meaningful discussion of such an important issue. And in order to underline its irrelevance, Castiglione presents it with a certain degree of irony. The speakers become caught up in its phraseology and are led off on a tangent. They move from a consideration of the courtier's two main professions to talking about two individually distinct professions, and forgetting about the cortegiano they start to speak of

litterati and *scrittori*. Their exchange of views then becomes quite silly, when Ludovico da Canossa says that the superiority of arms would be irrefutably evident if men-of-arms and men-of-letters were left to defend their own vocation against each other with the help of their respective weapons and tools. It finally becomes quite confused when Canossa tries to explain that Alexander the Great's envying the luck of Achilles in having had Homer as the herald of his deeds does not mean that Alexander actually deemed letters to be superior to arms. Alexander knew that as a warrior he had nothing to envy Achilles (he took it for granted in other words that that was his own supreme perfection), but he realized too that he would have had to be very fortunate indeed to find such a poet as Homer to sing of his own feats (he only envied Achilles in other words for being more fortunate in that respect). Thereupon the conversation is brought to an abrupt end, with Canossa saying that "omai si è parlato a bastanza", and Ludovico Pio retorting: "anzi troppo". Canossa had been aware all along, even while seemingly defending the superiority of arms in great earnest, that the arguments he was using were not altogether convincing. For instance he almost robbed the immortality argument of any significance by interjecting a "quasi mai", an "in parte", and by saying "i scritti, li quali *forse* non sariano *tanto* letti." If Castiglione found the querelle irrelevant, one may wonder why he did not leave it out altogether. The answer must be that it was a "disputazione lungamente agitata", and another aim of the *Cortegiano* being to provide a "ritratto di pittura" of a court and its entertainments, the portrait would have been incomplete if such a topical debate had been omitted. And it is the very fact of its inclusion in the *Cortegiano* as an established and well-known genre ("*questa* disputazione") with its own terminology and conventions, which is important for our purposes proving as it does the popularity of the querelle (and suggesting in fact that it was even more popular than the extent of the evidence will allow us to surmise for

the present). But the Cortegiano does not simply depict the querelle as popular. It portrays it too in the environment with which it had become closely identified: an environment of polite aristocratic intercourse in the vernacular. It is in that environment that we shall continue to find it for the remainder of the century.

C. The querelle during the latter part of the Cinquencento.

The querelle of Arms and Letters in the vernacular was primarily a literary phenomenon of the second half of the Cinquecento and the first work to appear on the subject after Brucioli's Dialogo, was published in Venice by Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari in 1558. It was the work once again of a physician, one Pompeo della Barba from Pescia in the province of Pistoia, and it bore the title Dialogo morale, nel quale si esamina, se sono di maggior pregio l'armi o le lettere. It is a short dialogue, some twenty pages long, and was published at the end of another and much longer dialogue on the secrets of Nature (De' segreti della natura), which is dedicated from Pescia on April 20th 1557 to Iacopo Salviati, the great-grandson of Lorenzo il Magnifico. The dialogue on arms and letters has no dedication.[31] In the first dialogue four Florentines (Bernardo Segni, Lodovico Domenichi, Pandolfo Martelli and Domenico Boni) talk about the secrets of Nature whilst strolling along the banks of the Arno. Towards evening Bernardo Segni invites the others to join in the wedding feast which is about to take place in his home and where they will be able to continue in the guise of Academicians the conversations they had begun that morning as Peripatetics. They are thus comfortably seated and waiting to be sumptuously regaled when they start to discuss arms and letters. They have been joined in the meantime by three other gentlemen, Benedetto Varchi, Giovan Batista Gello and Captain Niccolò Bernardi. The subject is introduced by the Captain and Messer Pandolfo, who had already argued about it but not been able to reach an agreement and who therefore ask the company to select two speakers to resolve the problem. After much consultation the choice falls on Messer Pandolfo himself and on Benedetto Varchi, who also happens to have been one of the most frequent speakers in Brucioli's Dialogi. The tone of the conversation is that of pre-dinner talk and it is interrupted, before any

settlement has been reached, by Bernardo Segni calling his guests to the table and suggesting that they keep something in store for the next day "ché voglio ci godiamo questi giorni di Carnovale allegramente, in ragionamenti piacevoli e utili" (p.154). The gentlemen thus withdraw with Lodovico Domenichi whetting their curiosity for the post-prandial game he has been organizing.

The same work of della Barba's, but much expanded, appears in a manuscript of the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence under the title Della nobiltà dell'armi e delle lettere. It is dedicated to Francesco de' Medici, the future Grand Duke, and the dedication is dated April 10th 1565 from Rome. Della Barba claims in the dedication, that this is "un Dialogo nato nel ozio delle mie molte occupazioni sotto la dolcissima e volontaria servitù di Pio quarto Pontefice Santissimo ottimo e rarissimo." All the speakers have been changed and no reference is made to the earlier version of the dialogue. The new participants would appear to belong to the environment of the Curia - they are Monsignore Giovio and il Conte Clemente Pietra, (who do most of the speaking), il Signore Giulio Collonna [sic] and il Signor Giannotto Castiglioni - and given the nature of della Barba's additions (many of which, as we shall be seeing, are taken straight from Nifo's Comentariolus), it is likely that the Florence manuscript is a re-working of the Venice edition in the light of new "evidence" brought to della Barba's attention while he was living and working in Rome. Pius IV was pope from December 1559 to December 1565 and della Barba must therefore have re-written his dialogue some time in the course of those years. [32]

The work which should probably be put next in line is Lo schermo by the Bolognese Angelo Vizzani (Viggiani) dal Montone, "nel quale per via di dialogo si discorre intorno all'eccellenza dell'armi e delle lettere,

intorno all'offesa e alla difesa, e s'insegna uno schermo di spada sola da filo, co'l quale può l'huomo non pure difendersi da qual si voglia colpo del nimico, ma anchora offender lui non poco." It was published in Venice in 1575, but would appear to have been written some fifteen years earlier. In a foreword to the Emperor Maximilian II, the author's brother explains that he is now bringing Lo schermo to light, fifteen years after Angelo's death, in accordance with the latter's last wishes, and addressing it as requested to the Emperor, who at the time of its composition had been King of Bohemia (the work is indeed preceded by a dedication from Angelo to Maximilian as King of Bohemia). Maximilian was elected King of Bohemia on September 20th 1562 and held the title until he became emperor on his father's death in June 1564. The Schermo must therefore have been written at about that time. [33] It is a dialogue, which in part I rehearses all the usual arguments of the querelle, between "i due più eccellenti nelle lor professioni all'età loro, l'Ilustrissimo Signor Aluigi Gonzaga, detto Rodomonte, e l'Eccellentissimo Messer Lodovico Boccadiferro Bolognese". [34] The one is a philosopher, the other a warrior ("un cavalliero"), and each takes the defence of his own profession, but their conversation is most amicable. Gonzaga has come to Bologna from Venice especially to meet Boccadiferro and exchange views with him. After much inconclusive talk, the dialogue ends with Gonzaga being shown around Boccadiferro's study and with an invitation by Gonzaga to Boccadiferro to join him for dinner ("desinar"), which Boccadiferro politely declines as he never has more than one meal a day. Lo schermo was re-published in Bologna in 1588, unaltered except for the dedications to Maximilian which have been replaced by a dedication to Count Pirro Malvezzi by one Zacharia Cavalcabò. [35]

The next dialogue is not by way of an appetizer but of a digestivo, with the two speakers,

Atilio and Torquato, shading from the afternoon heat to while away the lazy hours of the day with pleasant conversation. It is by Domenico Mora, who describes himself as "Bolognese, gentilhuomo Grisone, e cavalliere Academico Storditi". He was a professional soldier who knew also how to wield the pen, energetically if not always too fluently, and who has thereby earned himself a mention in the Enciclopedia italiana. He is the author of at least three books defending the honour of soldiers, two of which fall within the purview of this study.[36] His first work, dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici, was published in Venice (by Giovanni Varisco e compagni) in 1567 and is entitled Tre quesiti in dialogo sopra il fare batterie, fortificare una città et ordinar battaglie quadrate, con una disputa di precedenza tra l'arme e le lettere. It purports to be relating conversations held at Cosimo's court and its real subject is batteries, fortifications and orders of battle. Arms and letters are only discussed briefly at the beginning of the first and second quesito. They are no more than a small section of the whole book and not a well-defined and self-contained section either. It is somewhat surprising therefore that they should have been given such prominence in the title, and one can only assume that it was the popularity of the querelle which brought this about. Arms and letters would probably have attracted a wider audience for the book than too technical a title was likely to have done. It is easier to believe this if one bears in mind that arms and letters in this case are in fact a misnomer, for what Mora is talking about is an updated and personalized incident of the Knight and Doctor querelle. Arms and Letters however was what the genre was now called and what the reading public had come to expect and recognize. The title and polite setting of the dialogue are also misleading in another respect. They do not prepare us for the virulence of Mora's invectives against doctors. The virulence is born of resentment against the latters' pretences and pretensions, and in Mora's other work,

Il cavaliere, the invectives will rise to an amazing crescendo of hatred and bitterness. The circumstances which occasioned the animosity are like the mirror image of the circumstances behind Lanfranchino's Tractatulus: "tutto il giorno veggo molti, forniti assai più d'arditezza che di giudicio, sforzarsi di dare ad intendere al mondo d'essere d'acutissimo ingegno e di profondissime scienze e volere antiporsi a soldati di molto honore e dignità, con tanta mia mala sodisfattione, che adirato molto ne rimango e simile ad un leone ferito da pungente dardo" (p.25v°), says Atilio, who is the author's alias. Together with their pretentious ignorance, it is the venality of doctors and their litigiousness which particularly infuriate Mora:

> le tante chiose, le diverse leggi, le varie opinioni e gl'infiniti consigli fatti e mandati in luce da alcuni dottori, non miga da tutti, sono cagione non solamente d'una confusion grandissima di qual si voglia sottilissimo ingegno, ma etiandio della ruina delle republiche con la mercatura d'esse, laquale è hoggimai tanta e tale, che io tutto smarrito e stupefatto rimango della toleranza sua appo le genti, percioché per tal causa la maggior parte del mondo è in lite (p.26r°).

Mora is adamant that it is soldiers who must have precedence (even over the best of men-of-letters, i.e. philosophers), but what he demands for them is not mere ceremonial precedence. It is the right to rule, for, as is obvious to anyone (Mora's thinking is entirely empirical and experiential), "la forza domina la ragione." On those who would deny this right to soldiers Mora casts anathema, as Prassicio had done on those who conceded it to them. But doctors are not the only enemies with whom soldiers have to contend, they are not the only cause of evil in the world. There are infidels and heretics too, and soldiers alone can stamp out evil and heresy. Since therefore princes and Christendom would be nought but for the succour of arms, "qual lode maggiore si può dare all'huomo - Mora asks rhetorically - che dirgli Soldato?" (p.2v°).

Gentilhuomo could have been the reply of Girolamo Muzio Giustinopolitano. In his work which appeared under that title in Venice in 1571 (dedicated to the doge Luigi Mocenigo) and again in 1575 (with the same dedication) "in tre dialoghi si tratta la materia della nobiltà, e si mostra quante ne siano le maniere, qual sia la vera, onde ella habbia havuto origine, come si acquisti, come si conservi, e come si perda. Si parla della nobiltà de gli huomini e delle donne, delle persone private e de' Signori. Et finalmente tra la nobiltà delle arme e delle lettere si disputa qual sia la maggiore." [37] The conversations are said to have taken place in Florence in 1567, on the feast of St. John the Baptist, between a citizen, Eugenio, and a foreigner, Nobile, "nomi alle conditioni loro molto conformi" (p.1). Once again it is after dinner, "levata la tavola e i servidori partiti", that arms and letters are discussed. Regarding nobility the speakers had decided that "niuno è più nobile dell'altro, se non chi ha miglior natura e ingegno più atto alle scienze e alle arti nobili" (p.66), and in the course of discussing the origins of nobility, when the authorities most quoted apart from Aristotle were Dante and Bartolus, Nobile had made a distinction between two kinds of nobility, natural and civic ("civile"). Natural nobility derives from one's virtù and is universally recognised, whereas civic nobility is particular to a given place (say Florence) and one has it on account of one's name, one's family or the office one happens to be holding. Arms and letters are grantors of civic nobility. The nobility each calling bestows is at first said to be of equal standing to the other, because "né l'una senza l'altra governar si può giustamente, né l'altra senza l'una mantener securamente" (p.208). But as the dialogue proceeds, there emerges a muted but definite condemnation of warfare and its horrors - the sack of Rome is recalled and the battles of Pavia Marignano and Ravenna amongst others - with Nobile finally exclaiming: "et a cui pare, che le arme siano di beneficio

universale, Dio mandi la guerra a casa sua" (p.241). By the end arms have been all but cast aside, as they are simply no match for letters, which "di ornamento ci sono nelle cose prospere e di refugio nelle adverse. Se l'huomo è solo, se è accompagnato, se è nella città, se in villa, se in casa, se è fuori, sempre gli sono preste a porgere e utile e dilettatione; il che non so che la disciplina militare, né altro esercitio, sia atto a poter fare" (p.275). The speakers are aware too that in the hands of evil-minded individuals letters can cause much harm - wicked theologians beget heresies, bad physicians poison their clients instead of curing them and malevolent lawyers steal our belongings instead of protecting them, so that "la penna in mano di un maligno o di uno impudico, è peggio che una spada in mano di un furioso" (p.206) - and much stress is therefore laid on the necessity of their being accompanied at all times by virtù, so that a man-of-letters be truly an "huomo da bene". But when letters are conjoined with virtue, nothing can measure up to them. Letterati therefore should always and everywhere occupy the first place, and what is more they should always be at the helm of a city. Soldati on the other hand must always come second and their proper place is always at the oars. Did not Plato himself say, in the Republic, that letterati are the natural rulers of a state, whereas soldati are its natural defenders, its natural guard-dogs?

It so incensed Mora to read of a soldier being called a dog, that, from the depths of a Polish winter where he was serving in the king's army and where the cold weather kept him "più che non vorei nelle stuffe", he hit back in anger, pouring forth his venom and his contempt for all letterati in a continuous flow of semi-literate Italian, three-hundred full pages long with almost no full stops. The fruit of this hatred was Il cavaliere in risposta del Gentil'Huomo del Signor Mutio Iustinopolitano, nella precedenza del armi et

delle lettere, completed in "Polozgo in Russia Bianca il primo Aprile 1585" and published in Vilna four years later, with a dedication to the Captain General and Grand Chancellor of the Kingdom of Poland, Giovanni Zamoyski Azamosche:

> ho letto, Illustrissimo e Eccellentissimo Signore, il Gentil'huomo del Signor Mutio Iustinopolitano, che tratta della nobiltà, e mostra quanto siano le maniere, quale sia la vera e sua origine, e come si acquisti, conservi e si perda, e finalmente tra la nobiltà del Armi e delle Lettere quale sia la maggiore; e perché per qualche sdegno ricevuto da alcun Cavaliere, egli parla contro la nobiltà del'armi in maniera che a Cavalieri serebbe vergognia a lassare il gientilhuomo passare senza rispota, poi che dice la loro professione assere simile a quella de Canni, io in particulare, havendone sentito agravio, le ho fatto il presente Cavaliere in risposta. 38

The Cavaliere is a page for page, almost word for word reply to the Gentilhuomo and one can just imagine Muzio's book lying open in front of Mora as his pen covers sheet after sheet with resentment and invective to vindicate the honour of soldiers, because "ho provato, che l'armi realmente sono più nobilli delle lettere." The passion of Mora's harangue makes the Cavaliere by far the most original and entertaining work in this long series of repetitive dialogues and because Mora, with the exception of the more soft spoken Belisario Acquaviva, is the only soldier to contribute to the querelle and to speak out in defence of his own side, we shall take his Cavaliere to be a reply not only to Muzio, but to the genre as a whole with its often extravagant claims in favour of letters, and we will therefore leave it for more careful consideration at the close of this section.

With the next dialogue on the subject we return to a more civilized and more articulate environment: to the court of Ferrara as described in the Discorsi of Annibale Romei, which picture giornate of entertainment between "dame e cavaglieri" of the court. The first edition, published in Venice in 1585 and dedicated to Lucrezia d'Este Duchess of Urbino, contains five giornate. The second edition (Ferrara 1586) was re-organized into seven giornate, which is also the pattern of the five subsequent

editions (Verona 1586; Pavia 1591; Venice 1594, 1604 and 1619). [39] On the last day of each edition, "si tratta della precedenza dell'Arme e delle Lettere." The Discorsi open with a description of the round of entertainments with which the court of Ferrara busies itself throughout the year: the masks jousts tournaments feasts comedies and music-making during carnival, the shooting and hunting in spring, the strolls swims and games of summer at the Palace of Belriguardo, and the autumn fishing from a palace by the sea. It was at this time of year that the conversations reported in the book are said to have taken place. In the Discorsi more than in any other work the querelle appears as a subject with no other significance than to amuse redundant courtiers, the focal point of whose existence is the dining-table. The flower of the court, having heard mass, is travelling up-river on the Bucintaur, lead by the Countess of Sala, who is the "queen" of the day. Come lunch-time, the queen orders the table to be set and the courtiers to be seated, "dall'una banda i Togati e le Dame, e all'incontro i Cavaglieri e huomini di cappa" (p.194). After the meal, which was accompanied by music, the table is cleared and cards chess-boards and draughts set before the commensals. But just as they are about to start playing, the queen interrupts them and suggests another game:

> sí come due sono le conditioni delli huomini che degni di vero honore sono istimati, l'una delle quali di lettere e l'altra d'arme fa professione, cosí molte volte disputar si suole a qual di questi si debba dar la precedenza. Considerando io dunque, che in questo nobilissimo concerto, dall'una parte si trova il fior de' letterati di questo nostro secolo, e dall'altra Cavaglieri nell'arte militare eccellentissimi, prendendo questa bella occasione, intendo che hoggi per trattenimento del viaggio si habbi disputando a terminare, qual sia degno di maggior honore, o il letterato o l'armigero (pp.194-5).

Each side is made to elect a spokesman. Francesco Patritio is chosen by the letterati and Giulio Cesare Brancaccio by the cavaglieri. Having at first demurred, as the genre now requires, "stando che per le arme si difendono e s'amplicano i regni, e per le lettere si conservano e si governano" (p.196), Francesco Patritio then launches into

superlative praises of his calling. He is followed by Brancaccio who defends his own profession with equal fervour. Both quote what seem like an inordinate number of authorities for such a leisured occasion, and the arguments they adduce are the ones with which the reader is all too familiar. The letterato is "di quella virtù dotato, che rende l'uomo simile alle cose divine" (p.198); on the other hand "l'arte militare è veramente un cumulo di tutte quelle perfettioni, le quali in grado eminente rendono l'huomo Heroico" (p.202) At the end the queen is to pass judgement on the matter, but before she is allowed to do so, the courtiers still have to listen to a giurisconsulto , Signor Renato Cati, take up the case of laws, which he felt were not sufficiently vindicated by Patritio who, "più tosto partiale, che vero campione di tutti i letterati, sprezzando le ferocissime arme de' Giurisconsulti, ha solamente sfodrata la debolissima spada del Filosofo contemplativo" (p.207). When finally the queen does hand down her sentence, it is quite in keeping with the insubstantial nature of the dialogue: "havendo noi udite e ben considerate le ragioni dell'una e l'altra parte,... diciamo che i guerrieri honorandi e i dotti venerandi si debbon' estimare" (p.215).

In the same style as Romei's Discorsi and almost as popular were Stefano Guazzo's Dialoghi piacevoli, dedicated from Casale Monferrato on April 1st 1585 to Lodovico Gonzaga Duke of Nevers and published six times between 1586 and 1610 (the second time in Piacenza, the other five in Venice).[40] There are twelve dialogues, the sixth of which is "Del paragone dell'arme e delle lettere", between Cesare Scarampo and Carlo Rotario. It has a touch of humour about it which is totally lacking in our other works and which is due to the author's awareness that the subject, in its well-worn garb, has become somewhat irrelevant. Says Carlo to Cesare: "quando io vi havrò detto, che le lettere mi siano più in gratia che l'arme, che ne seguirà? Et quando all'incontro havrò detto, che più mi dilettano l'arme che

le lettere, che ne seguirà anche?" (p.167). "That I should know which to esteem more, following your wise example", is Cesare's reply, to which Carlo retorts: "posto che voi e io ci accordiamo nello stimar più le lettere che l'arme, non per questo l'arme rimarranno inferiori, perché contra di noi si leveranno molti, ch'antiporranno l'arme alle lettere. Voi sapete che questa è antica e non mai decisa quistione" (p.167). They finally agree that there is no harm in discussing the subject "per honesto trastullo", even if nothing is achieved in doing so. And certainly at the end the reader is no more enlightened than he was at the beginning. Carlo's last argument, to show that arms and letters have need of one another, is to quote (in Italian) the proem to the Institutes ("Imperatoriam maiestatem..." - see above p.27). This prompts Cesare to comment, in the closing words of the dialogue, that "questo nostro discorso s'ha a terminar in giuoco, poiché la sentenza di Giustiniano si conforma a quella d'uno spensierato, il quale dimandato quali offele fossero più dilicate, quelle di Milano o quelle di Cremona, rispose, tanto l'une quanto l'altre, e forse anche di più"(p.184).

There is a small shot of the querelle in Guazzo's other and more famous work, La civil conversatione. It consists of only one argument, the fame and immortality argument with Alexander envying Achilles as in the Cortegiano; but it is mentioned without much enthusiasm by the speakers, as though no more than a literary requirement, and they cast it aside for more interesting things no sooner have they picked it up. [41]

The century's last contribution to the querelle is Gabriele Zinano's Il viandante, overo della precedenza dell'armi et delle lettere, dedicated to the Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria II Della Rovere, and published in Reggio (?) in 1590 (?). [42] It is a conversation between two travellers riding to Rome, the

narrator and a viandante he comes acrоss, who is progressing clumsily because of a "difetto di sproni" and who "ne gli habiti e nel volto si mostrava lui essere più tosto amico dello studio di filosofia, che di quello de cavallieri" (p.8). They engage in conversation and when the narrator happens to say that he dislikes poetry, the subject switches to arms and letters. The viandante's logic turns out to be as limp as his horsemanship and he goes to abstruse lengths in order to prove nothing at all. "Le lettere dividerò secondo la divisione de gli enti, e l'armi secondo la diversità de i gradi" (p.18), he says. This gives him on the one hand the metafisico who "versa circa" divine matters, the fisico who deals with natural matters, and the legista and legislatore whose domain is the law; and on the other hand he has "gli Imperatori d'esserciti" (thereafter referred to as "duce sovrano"), "i capitani particolari" ("duce") and "i fanti e i cavalieri privati" ("soldato"). He then performs various permutations so as to compare each member of one group to every member of the other. The comparison is done from the standpoint of each individual's four causes (material, efficient, formal and final) and the duce for instance is said to be superior to the fisico or vice versa depending on the combination of their various causes. The efficient cause of the duce for example is prudence (the supreme virtue) and of the fisico experience. From that point of view the duce is superior to the fisico. But from the point of view of material causes it is the other way around, for the material cause of the fisico is "cose naturali", whereas of the duce it is war. The narrator ventures at one point to ask how this method can possibly be applied to the settlement of disputes about precedence, but the viandante is not put off in the slightest: "se tra loro il fisico e il Duce o altro disputasse di precedenza, e l'un più nobil luogo che l'altro desiderasse, si potria sopra la lor precedenza sententiare assolutamente ponderando l'una causa e l'altra, perché non sariano mai sí eguali nelle cause, che alcuno

non fosse superiore" (p.37). As with the suggestions contained in Biondo's Borsus, Zinano's proposals would require the setting up of a very learned commission indeed to adjudicate infallibly in cases of disputed precedence and without so much delay as to make the decision out-of-date by the time it had been reached. But it was not precedence which was Zinano's main concern, it would seem. Encomium was. The viandante's arguments are conducted in such a way as to culminate naturally in the praises of princes of Italy and her overlords. Having sentenced that a duce is superior to a legista in all four causes and a legislator similarly superior to a duce, he then remarks:

> et se questo non vorremo cosí assolutamente affirmare, diremo che Mosè, Cecrope, Foroneo e Mercurio Trimegisto, legislatori de gli Hebrei, de gli Egittij e de Greci fossero superiori all'hora a i Duci Hebrei, Egittij e Greci. Pur ci sarà bisogno d'alcuna consideratione, perché Alessandro Farnese, se ben dipende da Filippo d'Austria, potentissimo tra i potenti, non cederà a quei legislatori, essendo egli nel suo essercitio e ne i populi vinti legislatore. Ma né questi legislatori, né Saturno, né Apollo, né Cerere ..., né s'altro legislatore è stato maggiore tra gli antichi, potrà agguagliarsi né ad Alessandro, né a Cesare, né a Carlo Quinto, perché questi Duci furono liberi principi e duci e soldati e legislatori universali. ... e se [Carlo Quinto] troverà alcun legislatore che lo superi, sarà il grande figliuolo Filippo (pp.43-4).

Apart from these dialogues, the querelle also saw the contribution of two philosophical treatises, one in 1567 and the other nine years later. Both are strongly Aristotelian in inspiration and both have the tripartite division we already encountered in Ilicino and Nifo: statement of the problem in part I (i.e. presentation of pro-arms and pro-letters arguments), discussion of principles in part II, and resolution of the problem in part III (i.e. answer to part I on the basis of part II). The first treatise, although written and published in Bologna, is the only work of this latter period to have been composed by a southerner and for the intention of southerners (all be they Spanish). The author is Girolamo

Camerata "da Randazzo Siciliano, Dottor dell'Arti", and the work entitled Trattato dell'honor vero et del vero dishonore "con tre questioni qual meriti più honore: o la donna o l'huomo, o il soldato o il letterato, o l'artista o il leggista." [43] The main dedicatee is Ruigomez de Silva, "Prencipe d'Eboli, Camerier Maggiore e Consegliero dello Stato di Sua Maestà Catolica", and the dedicatee of the section on the soldato and the letterato is the Viceroy of Sicily, Don Garcia di Toledo, "Generale del Mare di Sua Maestà Catolica". The central thesis of Camerata's treatise is that one may deduce nobility from utility or necessity, in which case it is necessary to distinguish between times which have need not of letters but of arms and times which need not arms but letters, which means that on occasions arms and on others letters will be "da preporre". Another way of reasoning is to consider a letterato simply and absolutely and compare him to a soldato taken simply and absolutely; in this case the letterato will have to have precedence over the soldato, because letters perfect the mind whereas arms only perfect the body. A third solution is to compare the perfect letterato who has knowledge of all things to the perfect capo militare who satisfies all the required conditions. Here again the letterato will come out on top, for he is "felicissimo" and "similissimo a Dio". Such perfection however is not to be found here-below and therefore we must consider the letterato as he exists in this world. He will be of two sorts, either excellent in one field (in which case he is made for academic life) or good ("mediocre") at many (in which case he is cut out for life at court): "si potria ben dire, che il Professore di molte facoltà possa riuscire meglio nelle corti, e che quello, il quale è eccellente in una sola professione, possa riuscir meglio in uno studio" (p.40r°). The qualities required of a letterato in this world are that he be quick-witted, have a good memory, be sagacious, studious and bright, articulate and personable. The perfect general, for his part, must fear

God, be loyal to his prince and well-versed in the art of war, which means that he must have a knowledge of history cosmography geometry arithmetic astronomy natural philosophy and law, that he must be familiar with all instruments of war, be eloquent, sharp and well-travelled. In addition he must have virtù , authority and be fortunato . A general in other words must have both "cognitione dell'armi" and "intelligenza de lettere", and there are undoubtedly more generals to be found who approach the Idea of a perfect general than there are letterati approximating the ideal letterato. In a comparison of the two, preference will therefore go to the soldier, because he has knowledge of both arms and letters; but that does not mean that every soldier is superior to every man-of-letters. The first place must go to the general, the second to the "letterato eccellente", the third to colonels, the fourth to "altri letterati Dottori", the fifth to "altri capitani", the sixth to "altri letterati" and the seventh to "altri soldati". "Appare dunque come sia vero in parte che il letterato eccede il soldato in honore, e vero anco in parte sia, che il soldato eccede il letterato" (p.50v°). Camerata's reasoning is of philosophical inspiration and the majority of his arguments are of literary derivation (is his compromise solution, for instance, not reminiscent of Tartagni's?). Yet he is aware, as we have seen, of the gap which exists between the ideal and the real, and of the necessity therefore to argue from the standpoint of the way things are instead of what they ought to be. This makes him sound at times more practical and realistic than the authors of the other works of the later Cinquecento. But it is only a fleeting impression and because so much of his discourse is in fact philosophical (and therefore "academic" and élitist), the querelle in his hands is kept firmly within the ambit of refined and exclusive entertainment.

Academic in the true sense of the word is the

other treatise. It was presented on three successive occasions (one for each part) to the Florentine Academy in 1576, under the consulate of Agnolo Segni. Its author is Lorenzo Giacomini Tebalducci and the title, Della nobiltà delle lettere e delle armi ragionamenti. It was not published until 1821 - and then not so much on account of its contents as of the purity, according to its editor, of the Tuscan tongue in which it was written - but it seems to have enjoyed considerable popularity nonetheless, for there are at least seven extant sixteenth century manuscripts of it.[44] The author gives a utilitarian justification to his undertaking: "né doverà esser giudicata inutile, né di poco momento questa nostra considerazione, poiché non è inutile, né di poco momento al ben ordinare la vita, il conoscere quali cose meritino esser più apprezzate, e quali meno, accioché le più apprezzabili più apprezziamo e ad esse principalmente, come a fine, indrizziamo le azioni nostre" (pp.2-3). But the more he becomes involved in the intricacies of his argument, the further does the subject seem to recede from the contingencies of human existence - Giacomini is the only author not to make any reference to contemporary events - and the less susceptible does it become of any practical application. He reduces the debate to the dimension of the virtues (moral and intellectual) and thereby to a comparison of the active and contemplative lives, and he proceeds by means of a dissection, as it were, of man's soul ("anima"), to show that of its three potencies (the vegetative, the sensitive and the intellective) the latter, especially insofar as it speculates, is the noblest, and that therefore contemplation is the truest and purest expression of man. Of course there are all the usual distinctions and provisos:

> noi non neghiamo, né abbiamo negato, che gli uomini forti non siano più nobili di coloro, che hanno la dottrina morale, perché nelle morali è migliore la azione della cognizione, e conseguentemente che siano più nobili de'grammatici, dei sofisti, dei retori, de'logici, degli storici, dei poeti, e de'filosofi ancora, se saranno filosofi imperfetti, che abbiano disposizione più tosto

che abito di scienza. Però bisogna prendere nell'uno e nell'altro genere di virtù uomini eccellenti. Così concluderemo, che quella spezie sia migliore, il più eccellente individuo della quale è migliore del più eccellente dell'altra (p.90).

This enables Giacomini to pay homage to his master, for the most excellent individual, we are told, is none else than Aristotle, "perfetto in ogni sorte di virtù" and "veramente maestro di coloro che sanno" (p.90). The pecking order (the order of nobility) at which Giacomini ultimately arrives, is the most complex we have yet encountered. Contemplation is at the top and it is of three kinds. The first is termed sapienzia , for it meditates upon God, the Intelligences, creation and its causes. The second is natural science, which speculates upon natural substances and God as their principle. The third is mathematics, which concerns itself with numbers. After contemplation comes action, and in the first place "azioni civili", of a prince in particular, who guides the commonwealth towards happiness. Then there are as many degrees as there are virtues; in the second place come the actions of a liberale , in the third those of a forte and so on and so forth. After that comes moral science ("dottrina morale") which is, as we have seen, cognizione but not azione . It deals with virtù and happiness, politics (the knowledge required of magistrates), law and economics ("cognizione economica"). At the bottom of the scale come the arts, such as logic, rhetoric, poetry, music, history and, very last, the art of war ("arte militare"). In that they are crafts, these are less noble than moral science, but their application ("le operazioni, nelle quali consiste il loro uso") is more or less noble depending on the virtue which informs each one of them (pp.57-8). Arms thus occupy the sixth noblest position, insofar as they are identified with fortitude; but as the art of war, they rank lowest. It is not quite clear how they would fare as the art of war practised by a man endowed with fortitude; and indeed Giacomini's treatise leaves much to be desired in terms of

the practical guide he had promised it would be.

The final work on the subject is neither a dialogue nor a philosophical treatise but a short essay, a Discorso sopra la lite delle armi e delle lettere, et a cui si dee il primo luogo di nobilità attribuire. It is by Francesco Bocchi and was published in Florence in 1580 and dedicated at the end of the previous year to Niccolò Nasi. Bocchi, who lived the precarious existence of a professional orator and letterato, and who is known to have had to pander more to the fancies of his patrons than to the tastes of his own free will, is the only man-of-letters in the querelle, apart from Nifo, to grant supremacy to arms.[45] But like Nifo, he does so without actually impairing the nobility of learning and in such a way that the superiority of arms appears merely theoretical in the context of his own day and age. Letters he interprets very literally, and the art of war he reduces to a purely mental exercise. "Tutte le arti - he says - sono nell'intelletto collocate" and therefore "il guerriero principale poco ha di bisogno di questo aiuto [i.e. l'operare del corpo] per fornire le sue imprese; anzi col consiglio solo adempie il tutto felicemente" (p.12). To prove this he gives the example of Antonio da Leva, who suffered from such severe gout that he had to be carried on to the battlefield in a chair, and yet, with the sheer strength of his mind, managed to rout innumerable enemies and win countless victories. Bocchi further vindicates the supremacy of arms by means of an argument which, when correctly read, turns out in fact to be detrimental to their cause. It is often maintained, he says that the best is the opposite of the worst, that that polity for instance is best (monarchy) which has the worst (tyranny) as its opposite. Therefore the present "pessima condizione di guerra" (p.27) must be a sure indication of the art of war's nobility. On the other hand it is also often argued that philosophy is the noblest of arts, and that philosophy and letters are one and the same thing. But with the latter

part of this proposition Bocchi does not agree. The philosopher only needs letters incidentally, for his function is to contemplate "la natura delle cose, senzachè gli scritti altrui l'aiutino e lo sovengono" (p.8). Letters for their part are no more than an exchange commodity (as Marxist critics would say nowadays): "le quali lettere, peroché sono parole equivocamente dette, non sono per sé ordinate altrimenti, ma in cambio rappresentano i fatti del tempo passato e per l'avvenire conservano di quelli la memoria" (p.24). In other words letters (and literature) have no intrinsic quiddity, but live only as parasites off reality, whereas arms are a very real fact of life, the very stuff in fact that life is made of. Bocchi drives home this point by reminding his readers of the sad plight of Italy under foreign arms and of the threat posed to Christendom by the warrior Turks (two truths which few of the authors of this latter period felt they could pass over in silence, not even in the most superficial of dialogues, although they preferred when they could to turn a blind eye to "quello che senza dolor ricordar non si pò" - Cortegiano, I, xliii):

et la nazione Turchesca in questo tempo, prezzando poco gli altri studij tutti, con gran cura esercita le armi, per le quali ella è montata in grandezza e in honore, e ogni giorno più per le nostre rovine felicemente si avanza, né si porrà giamai fine alle miserie, se prima non si incomincia con le armi a ristorare i danni, che habbiamo sostenuto; però che non le lettere, le quali non hanno vigore alcuno in questo affare (da quelle tuttavia infuori, per cui si viene in cognizione delle cose divine...), ma le armi con virtù esercitate e con valore possono, come cosa migliore e più sovrana, procacciarci la felicità in questa vita e renderci tutto quello honore parimente, che questo luogo e questa horrevole nazione per le prodezze degli antichi nostri ha posseduto, e con la ragione e con le armi raffrancare le forze indebolite e abbattere tutte quelle genti, le quali con barbara fierezza solamente hanno cotante provincie, cotante isole e cotante terre in breve spazio di tempo conquistato (pp.31-2).

Bocchi may be an exception for giving such emphasis to the "facts of life" and for putting out a call to arms, as a man-of-letters, but when all is said and

done, his Discorso does not differ all that much from the other contributions to the querelle made during the later sixteenth century: it too is a harmless literary entertainment, a play with words and definitions.

Arms and Letters are the words under which all but one of the works of this latter period appear; they have become the established title of the genre. Inside the works however one encounters a whole variety of expressions to designate one or the other calling and its followers. Soldato and letterato, which figure in the title of Camerata's work, are by far the most frequent and their all-embracing vagueness (together with the all-embracing vagueness of arms and letters) is an indication of how the querelle has come, on the whole, to deal with two general vocations instead of two particular "classes", as was the case with its Knight and Doctor precursor. But we still find, especially on the side of letters, many terms which designate specific professions. Members of the legal profession (legista, avvocato, giurisconsulto) and legislators have been joined by grammatici, sofisti, retori, logici, storici, poeti, medici, fisici, metafisici, filosofi and even scrittori. On the side of arms, the professori della militia are frequently referred to by their rank (captain, colonel, general, duce, capo militare) but often too they are described, unlike the dubbed merchants or nouveaux riches of the Knight and Doctor querelle, as being actively engaged in the mestier dell'armi: armigeri, guerrieri, martiali, huomini armati, bellicosi, who fight in guerre or in battaglie. Despite its practical nature, their profession, it is always stressed, is to all effects a learned one: arte di guerra, arte militare, disciplina delle armi, scienza de soldati. Sometimes too they are identified by the qualities they possess, in particular their valore and the virtue of fortezza. They are thus forti, whereas their opponents are dotti or savi because they have dottrina, scientie and sapere. The contending

parties can also be singled out by the tools of their trade (carte, scritti, libri, penna or spada) or by their "uniform" (togati and huomini di robba lunga against huomini di cappa). But after soldato and letterato, the words which recur most often and in every work without fail are cavaliere and dottore; and this is because the querelle of Knights and Doctors, despite the enlarged scope of the genre, is still at the heart of the matter.

In the case of Mora, both his Tre quesiti and his Cavaliere can be considered simply as updated and slightly modified versions of the Knight and Doctor querelle. His enemies all go by the name of dottori, and although this can at times mean men of learning in a more general sense (and especially heretics and religious reformers), the butt of his invective is in most cases what he calls "dottori leggisti". His cavaliere too is often termed soldato, but that is because every soldier is a knight. What makes him so is not any insignia he might happen to be wearing or the fact that he may have been dubbed (Mora makes no allusion at all to such exteriorities), but it is the very nature of his calling, the magnificence of the profession of arms, which sets the soldier apart from the crowd and releases him from obedience to all laws save those of honour. And it is precedence, as we saw (above p.232), which is Mora's main concern, to ensure that the men on whose shoulders the world rests get their proper due at all times: "favore e sodisfacimento grandissimo mi farebbe, se qualche spirito gentile mi facesse vedere in iscritto, che i dottori per vere ragioni havessero da precedere i soldati, laqual cosa io la niego e negherò sempre, e mi offerisco prontissimo, quantunque questa non sia molto mia professione, a rispondergli in iscritto." This is the promise which he makes through the mouth of Atilio in the Tre quesiti (p.27r°) and which he delivers in the Cavaliere in response to Muzio's challenge.

The Gentilhuomo had been mostly about the intrinsic nobility of arms and letters, but in certain sections Muzio was clearly arguing from the perspective of the Knight and Doctor querelle and dealing with questions of ceremonial precedence. Eugenio remarks that in Italy cavalieri usually precede dottori, which Nobile says is an abuso but explains as being due to the fact that knights are created by princes whereas doctors are made by Colleges, which receive their authority from princes. He goes on to praise the ordini of Bologna, according to which doctors must have precedence over knights on all occasions, both public and private, save a few important feasts such as San Petronio, San Martino and four or five others (p.242). The doctors in the Gentilhuomo however are not just doctors of law. At the beginning of Book II Nobile states explicitly that that title is granted to anyone who has completed his studies, be it of law, medicine or any other "science". This explanation is contradicted somewhat in Book III, where only those who teach their subject publicly are said to enjoy the title. But whatever may have been the case, it is clear that Muzio has borrowed both arguments and terminology from the Knight and Doctor querelle, whilst widening its scope in order to include all men of learning.

There are some texts in which the Knight and Doctor querelle is distinguished from the querelle of Arms and Letters. In Romei's Discorsi for instance, as we have seen, it is first a letterato who defends his profession against cavaglieri and then a giurisconsulto who does so. Zinano's viandante, having compared metafisici to duci, duci to fisici and so on, in the last resort turns to a comparison of soldati and professori di legge, insisting that this is a different matter from what had come before: "alcuni, lasciando confusi i soldati e i professori di leggi, hanno fatto volumi con inscrittione della precedenza dell'armi e delle lettere, quasi che non siano altre lettere

che le leggi, quasi che, ove il gran Duce precede, ogni privato fante o cuciero o Capitano preceder debba, e quasi che, ove alcun professore di leggi preceda, che preceder debba ogni dottoruccio" (p.41). This accusation of his is clear evidence however of how the two querelles had on the whole been blended and become undifferentiated. Indeed in most texts, dottore and letterato, cavaliere and soldato are used indiscriminately. The words within each pair are often taken to be synonymous. There are times nevertheless when the arguments and expressions are unmistakably those of the Knight and Doctor tradition.

Almost every text mentions the issue of ceremonial precedence. Giulio Cesare Brancaccio for instance, the spokesman for the knights in Romei's Discorsi, says (illustrating at the same time the indiscriminate linguistic usage now typical of the querelle) that "nelle cerimonie dove si tien conto della precedenza, vediamo che più presso la persona del re o dell'Imperatore vanno i gran Capitani e gli huomini di guerra, che non fanno i Secretarij, i gran Canzellieri e i Consiglieri, ancora che siano gran Dottori e gran letterati; segno manifesto che dalli istessi Re e dallo Imperatore sono estimate molto più le arme delle lettere e gli armigeri de i Dottori" (p.215). The privileged position enjoyed by knights at the court of princes is confirmed by Carlo Rotario in Guazzo's Dialoghi piacevoli, who adds that even republics such as Venice Genoa and Lucca give preference to arms, "onde siamo assai bene certificati che, per l'uso commune, non solamente d'Italia, ma di tutte le nationi, l'arme prevagliano alle lettere" (p.182). The one exception is Rome, where the pope puts the toga before the spada and grants precedence to Cardinals and Legates over all "gradi cavalliereschi", "non solamente perché lo stato ecclesiastico è più degno del secolare, ma perché le lettere sono di lui proprie" (p.182). Carlo Rotario further illustrates his point with some specific examples. In every city of Italy there is, he says, a "capo soprano" with the title of Governor, Captain General, Viceroy or

Viceduke, who is a knight and who has precedence over all "magistrati togati", such as the Podestà, the Captain of Justice, the President, the Grand Chancellor and Senators. He also mentions the case of an embassy sent by the Duke of Mantua to present condole/nces to the King of France, Francis II, on the death of his father Henry. The two ambassadors were the Conte di Gambara and Senator Fao and the first to step forward in the presence of the King was the Count, because he was a cavagliere.

The question of precedence did not merely concern doctors in their relationships with knights; it also affected each group individually. Mora, in the Cavaliere, warns that the nature of each knight's knighthood must be taken into consideration, "essendo che li Cavalieri fatti dalli maggiori Prencipi doveranno precedere quelli fatti dalli menori" (p.159). According to Nobile in the Gentilhuomo the same holds true for doctors:

dicono i Dottori, che il Papa e lo Imperadore con la sola parola danno il dottorato e che, se altri con debita pruova e con diligente esaminatione tal dignità da alcuno di loro conseguisce, ha da precedere a gli altri Dottori, quantunque avanti di lui siano stati dottorati. Il che si ha da intendere anche di tutti i gradi, che da maggiori e da minori Prencipi sono conferiti: che quale è dal maggiore honorato, a gli altri debbia precedere. Et i dottori creati da' Papi e da gli Imperadori, hanno da essere a gli altri anteposti per la maggior dignità di chi gli ha dottorati (p.94).

These various degrees in both professions give rise to a complex hierarchical order of titles and dignities. Camerata says that a letterato who is not adottorato (and we have already come across these specifications in Andreini - see above p.219) gets no title at all, that a doctor is called Eccellente, and if he has taught for many years, he will be addressed as Illustre, which is the top of the scale for men-of-letters. A "professore della militia" on the other hand automatically gets the name of Strenuo; a colonel is immediately called Illustre, a general Illustrissimo and a commander-in-chief Eccellentissimo. From which it is deduced that

the profession of arms is more noble than the profession of letters, for that profession is better which awards superior titles to those who practise it, the name being an indication of the nature and dignity of a thing (pp.31r°-v°).

In relating matters of ceremonial precedence, our authors seek confirmation of their views in contemporary circumstances, but in the first instance it is from legal precedent that they argue their case, and if their knowledge of this is rather patchy, they are at least familiar with the most obvious passages of the Corpus iuris and the most pertinent glosses and commentaries. Camerata, in part I of his treatise (the section, that is, which presents the views of his predecessors), argues that in all the "laws of the emperors" (i.e. Roman law) arms are mentioned before laws and are therefore more privileged and superior. He proves his point by referring, amongst others, to the proem of the Institutes (see above p.27) and to the introduction to the Code (ibid.). He also quotes Baldus and Bartolus on the subject of the soldier's immunity from normal testamentary procedures;[46] and the compromise solution with which he concludes the central section of his treatise (see above p.242) bears a marked resemblance to Tartagni's compromise solution. There is a watered-down and somewhat modified version of Tartagni's compromise solution in Muzio's Gentilhuomo, where Nobile explains that "trattandosi materie di arme" knights ought to have precedence, whereas a doctor should precede in "cose civili" and also "nelle indifferenti" (p.242). Muzio would seem to have the legal tradition of the querelle in mind too when he maintains (through the mouth of Nobile) that knights who have simply been dubbed but "mai non si vestirono arme, né mai sfodrarono spada, né sono atti ad alcuna operatione di valoroso cuore" (p.94) should not enjoy knightly privileges (which, in this instance, he confines to matters of precedence). Unlike the jurists though, he applies the same rule to

persons who have been granted an honorary doctorate but whose ignorance precludes them from being considered true doctors. Mora actually agrees with him on this point. The dottorato , he says, has been "concesso a molti bufali" (Cav. p.114). This however he interprets as an indication that no doctorate is of any value and therefore that no doctors are entitled to any privileges. Mora also gives his own twist to the question of the soldier's legal immunities. According to the legal tradition, these immunities applied mainly to matters of inheritance. Mora's view is that soldiers need submit to no laws at all, except the edicts of their prince or general and the laws of honour, "regolandosi li Cavalieri con le loro leggi d'honore, con le sue pene del biasimo, del vituperio e del infamia" (Cav. p.44).

From the legal tradition of the querelle, the quotation most often cited is the phrase "imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis decoratam, verum etiam legibus oportet esse armatam." We find it in Muzio Mora Romei and Guazzo; and Camerata, as we have seen, refers to it too. A catch-phrase which enjoyed even greater popularity however was Cicero's "cedant arma togae", which appears in seven of the eleven texts of the second half of the Cinquecento. Its popularity (which probably also extended beyond the confines of the genre in its written form) is attested by the words of Atilio in Mora's Tre quesiti, who says of those who defend the pre-eminence of doctors: "essi altra ragione non sanno addurre in favor loro, che questo verso, cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae, onde pare, che il dicitore di tal verso fosse Evangelista e che il credergli sia articolo di fede" (p.26r°). There is further proof of the great popularity of this stray verse of Cicero's in Giacomini's Ragionamenti. In his introduction Giacomini had said that the querelle was a "disputa ... molto divulgata per le bocche di tutti" (p.2), and the very first opinion he then addresses in the treatise proper is Cicero's, which he prefaces with the

words: "cedan l'arme alla toga".

It will be remembered that it was Ilicino who first put this verse into circulation, and it may well be that it was via Ilicino that it reached the later authors of the querelle. There is no doubt that many were acquainted with his interpretation of Petrarch's Triumph of Fame and that some at least had read his text at first hand. Giacomini again, who, as has just been pointed out, was aware in his Ragionamenti of rehearsing a well-worn theme, concludes the first part of his treatise with a recollection of Petrarch:

> e finalmente il nostro Toscano Poeta nel 'Trionfo della Fama' prepone l'arme, facendo prima menzione degli armigeri e collocandoli da lato destro, ove dice:
>
> a man destra, ove prima gli occhi porsi
> la bella donna avea Cesare, e Scipio,
> ma qual più presso a gran pena m'accorsi.
>
> E nella terza poi:
>
> i' non sapea di tal vista levarme
> ...
>
> Né è da credere, che ciò facesse a caso, ma consideratamente e con giudicio, siccome suole in tutte le cose (pp.25-6).

Petrarch's opinion is also part of the new evidence which della Barba added to his Dialogo in the Florence manuscript. But it was Muzio, one hundred years after Ilicino's commentary first appeared, who relied on him most heavily. He not only mentions the existence of the commentary, but he actually quotes from it verbatim. Ilicino does not get the credit for it however, because Muzio believed the commentary to have been the work of Filelfo: "dicano quel che si vogliano gli altri poeti in particolare de' letterati, ché il Petrarcha in generale prepone pur i cavalieri, quelli ponendo da man destra alla fama e i letterati dalla manca. Sopra la qual sentenza Francesco Filelfo fa un gran discorso, le arme alle lettere anteponendo" (p.232). Ilicino's commentary had always been accompanied, except in the first edition, by Filelfo's commentary to the Canzoniere. The Canzoniere usually preceded the Trionfi, and in several editions

there is no separate title-page for the Trionfi, which means that Ilicino's name only appears in small print at the top of the dedication to Borso d'Este. It must have been one of these editions which Muzio had read.[47] But that it was really Ilicino's commentary he had in mind, there can be no doubt, as we may ascertain from the following passage, which is a literal transcription of the first axiom in the central section of Ilicino's querelle (see Appendix I, v, 9-13):

passando a quello, che hai detto del Filelfo, per non havere egli saputo distinguer la fama dalla virtù e dalla nobiltà, è caduto in quell'altro errore di voler preporre le arme alle lettere, e havendo proposti quattro verissimi argomenti per le lettere, e di quelli provatene tutte le parti, ne fa poi un tale in favor delle arme. Il ben publico e universale è molto più degno di honore e di laude che il ben privato e particolare. La arte militare è per ben publico e universale, e le scienze e gli studij sono per bene particolare; adunque la disciplina militare è più degna di laude, che qualunque altra facultà o scienza privata. Cosí dice quel valent'huomo (p.235).

As one might have expected, Ilicino's words then found their way, via the Gentilhuomo, into Mora's Cavaliere, where they are quoted with approval:

vi aspetto dunque - says Mora to Muzio - per udire quello che volete rispondere al particulare del oppinione de Filelfo recusata da voi, la quale conclude, che il ben publico e universale è molto più degno di honore e di laude che il ben privato e particulare, e che essendo l'arte militare per ben publico e universale e le scientie e li studij per ben particulare, che perciò la disciplina militare è più degna di laude, che qualunque altra scientia privata (p.238).

Ilicino, we have seen, had also influenced Nifo, who in turn had inspired Brucioli. Brucioli for his part does not seem to have impressed anyone, unless it be his former friend and patron Luigi Alamanni who, a few years after the publication of the last edition of Brucioli's Dialogi and from his refuge at the court of France, wrote an epigram on the subject of arms and letters, which some time later was to find its way into Guazzo's Dialoghi piacevoli:

molti furo a quistion, chi avanti vada,
o piuma ornata, o valorosa spada;

se questa mette in opra e quella insegna,
l'una e l'altra di par chiamerei degna (p.183).[48]

But if Brucioli's dialogue of Arms and Letters fell into oblivion almost as soon as it had been written, the same did not happen to the text which had fostered it, and thirty years after it had first been published Nifo's Comentariolus was still being plagiarized (such was its fate!). Amongst the new material added to the second version of his work, della Barba included a literal translation of Nifo's definition of arms. In 1525 Nifo had written:

per Arma itaque non intelligere volumus instrumenta, quibus res militaris agitur, ut gladius, machina, equus, thorax, galea et id genus, sed ea omnia, quibus fortes viri ac magnanimi honesti causa pugnando parati sunt sese exponere periculis mortis ... Hoc pacto Arma intelligendo, ab his milites dici possunt. Quo fit, ut inter disciplinam militarem et Arma non parva differentia sit, nam militaris disciplina docet, Arma vero in usum veniunt. Disciplina militaris praecepta tradit, Arma in militando praecepta servant. Disciplina militaris inter Literas, disciplinas ac scientias enumerantur. Docet enim quid rectum sit in militari ipsa actione. Arma vero sunt vires, potentiaque, quibus milites militando ad victoriam obtinendam in re militari honesti causa utuntur. Qua ratione fit, ut a disciplina militari miles dicatur nemo (pp.XIVv^{o} - XVr^{o}).

In 1565 or thereabouts Giulio Colonna is made to say:

io crederò che per armi si debba intendere non gli stormenti de la milizia, come sono lancie, spade, picche e corsaletti, ma l'huomo valoroso, che giudiziosamente combatte; cioè che per armi s'intenda il valore a la potenza de soldati, e non la disciplina che ne dà precetti, perché allhora saria arte o scienza, ma la virtù de l'animo e 'l valore con il quale gl'huomini prudenti per honore e gloria non dubitano esporsi a la morte; e per darli una intera e breve diffinizione, direi l'Armi non esser' altro che l'huomo valoroso, che combatte prudentemente (pp.55r^{o}-v^{o}).

There are four or five such borrowings from the Comentariolus in the second version of della Barba's dialogue, including as well Nifo's definition of letters. Since there are no traces of Nifo's influence in the printed edition of 1558, we must assume, as was suggested earlier on, that the Comentariolus was brought to della Barba's attention during his Roman residence. This would mean that it was still in circulation a good forty years

after it had been published.

One work whose star at that time was certainly far from faded was Castiglione's Cortegiano. The hypothesis was put forward in the first section of this chapter that the Cortegiano was possibly instrumental in creating the vogue for a querelle of Arms and Letters in the vernacular. If this was indeed the case, one could perhaps have expected to find the Cortegiano quoted more often in the context of the genre than in fact it was. But there is not much of course which is quotable from the very brief version of the querelle as it appears in Castiglione. It is most memorable for adducing Petrarch's sonnet "O fortunato che sí chiara tromba / trovasti e chi di te sí alto scrisse" to prove Alexander's envy of Achilles. Both della Barba and Guazzo, in the Civil conversatione, quote this episode, but as they do not mention the Cortegiano by name, one cannot be absolutely sure that it was Castiglione they were copying. There is in fact only one author who makes an explicit reference to the Cortegiano. He is Lorenzo Giacomini, who in his Ragionamenti wrote: "né si dee in modo alcuno dire, che la propria e principale operazione del Principe sia guerreggiare fortemente, ma sibbene prudentemente governare, come rettamente giudicò il Castiglione nel suo libro inscritto Cortegiano, autore non indegno d'essere qui nominato, sebbene non rettamente giudica quando attribuisce al Cortegiano per principale professione l'esercizio dell'arme"(p.66). To be sure, this is slight evidence with which to prove a point, but it must be remembered that in his introduction Giacomini had disclaimed any originality on his own behalf, saying that he was merely following, albeit more methodically, in the well-trodden footsteps of others. One may presumably take it therefore that whatever he quoted was part of the stock-in-trade of the genre (if only in its oral manifestations), and it is thus not unlikely that the Cortegiano, by the mere fact of its existence and

popularity, played a part in keeping the querelle alive. There is no doubt however that in measurable terms it was Ilicino who, of all the modern authors, left the greatest mark on the genre.

Enduring though the popularity of Ilicino's commentary may have proved, there was someone whose influence was still more pervasive than his, and that was Aristotle. In della Barba's dialogue, Aristotle's opinion is the main point of reference throughout. Vizzani's Boccadiferro speaks of "questi nostri Peripatetici" (p.10r°). It is chiefly on the basis of what Aristotle said that nobility is discussed and defined in the Gentilhuomo. Mora takes it for granted that any letterato belongs to the "scola d'Aristotele" (Cav.,p.56) For Francesco Patritio in Romei's Discorsi, Aristotle is, not exceptionally, il Filosofo . Zinano's viandante tells his interlocutor that, in order to grasp the question of arms and letters, "bisogna che entri meco nelle scuole de Peripatetici" (p.29). But it is above all in the two works which are emphatically philosophical treatises, Camerata's and Giacomini's, that the ubiquitousness of Aristotle is most evident. Camerata justifies his methodology - the three-fold division of his questione - on the basis of the procedure taught by Aristotle, "seguendo il modo dimostratoci da Aristotele" (p.28r°). He uses the syllogism as his maieutic tool and at one point he makes a distinction getween "parlare fedelmente" and "ragionare naturalmente". The former, which is of Christian inspiration, he dismisses as less reliable than the natural reasoning of Aristotelian derivation. To Giacomini, who also uses the syllogism and divides his treatise into three parts, Aristotle is, as we have seen, the most perfect human being ("perfetto in ogni sorte di virtù") and "veramente maestro di coloro che sanno", who has taught mankind all there is to know and thereby earned for himself redemption and everlasting salvation:

egli n'ha dimostrato la virtù e scoperto la via della felicità, ed ha insegnato che Iddio si dee amare con quella amicizia, che è verso [sic] un bene eccellente. Cosí è da credere, che egli lo amasse ed onorasse, e sebbene non ebbe osservanza della legge, non per questo venne escluso dalla amicizia di Dio, perché ad un popolo in particolare era data la legge, né obbligava all'osservanza se non quelli, che la avevano ricevuta (p.91).

Certainly most of what our authors say, they would appear to have learnt, either directly or indirectly, from Aristotle, for the notions upon which they call to establish an order of precedence are mostly borrowed from a world-view of Aristotelian dimensions (such as was sketched out in the chapter on Ilicino - see above p.93), in which the basic elements of discrimination are the two levels of man's existence, typified by the moral and intellectual virtues, action and contemplation, and utility and uselessness, one thing being nobler than another - depending on the view-point one accepts - either for benefitting more people (i.e. for being more useful) or for being intrinsically more perfect, that is for coming closer to the simplicity and oneness of God (i.e. for being, metaphysically speaking, useless). To be sure, in many of the more superficial dialogues, these ideas are not consciously spelt out, but they are unmistakably a part of the cultural vocabulary which the authors take for granted.

It is of course nothing exceptional for literature of the Renaissance to be derivative and imitative, but the point needed to be stressed in this case, in order to show that the querelle of Arms and Letters, especially in its later phase, was born more of literary precedent than of contingent circumstances. There is very little to distinguish one work from the other, except for its mode of presentation. From Brucioli to Andreini the same arguments turn up time and again and hardly any author ventures to innovate. The genre is on the whole inward instead of outward-looking. Naturally there are moments when contemporary events are

touched upon, but the speakers usually shy away from them, because reality is unpleasant. It is either, as we have seen, the sad plight of Italy under foreign rule or the Turkish threat to Christendom. At times it can also be the unpalatable truth that, despite what it would be nice to believe, arms in actual fact have precedence over letters. Zinano's viandante for instance assesses his times in the following way: "a i tempi nostri, non dirò in Francia o in Hispagna, ove le lettere non sono in sommo pregio, e non dirò e in Germania e in Moscovia e in Tartaria e in Persia, e non dirò sotto l'Imperio Ottomano, ma in Italia dirò, dove le lettere più che in altro loco sono estimate, sono i Duci sempre a i letterati preposti" (p.21). But this he considers irrelevant, "trattandosi qua, non di chi precede, ma di chi merita precedere", and so he retreats into the fantasy world of words. That is the level at which the querelle unfolds. It is, as we have stressed repeatedly, a social and literary entertainment, played according to established rules and the purpose of which is not necessarily to resolve anything but simply to be played. Nothing is achieved by concluding that "i guerrieri honorandi e i Dotti venerandi si debbon' estimare", but nothing more could have been achieved, because the premises from which the game moved precluded the possibility of any other solution being reached. It is accepted by all that both arms and letters are noble and the question therefore is "a cui si dee il primo luogo di nobilità attribuire", as the title of Bocchi's Discorso puts it; it is to find out who, as we might say today, is "more equal", not who is good and who is bad, who is better and who is worse, but who is better and who is best. In the later Cinquecento we no longer sense the animosity which opposed two social groups, or two cultures even, in most of the texts of the early phase of the querelle; and this is perhaps the most significant feature of this later period. Soldati and letterati are portrayed as friends not enemies: they talk together, play together and eat together. Arms and

letters are allies not rivals, and it is socially acceptable to say so. On this point all (but one) of our authors concur, and it also becomes a leitmotiv of the genre to state that no soldier, especially no commander, and in particular no prince can adequately carry out his duties if, to a mastery of arms he does not also add a knowledge of letters. More interesting still, it has become the accepted convention to give praises to one's dedicatee which stress his competence precisely in one and the other field. Zinano for instance says to the Duke of Urbino: "V.A. Serenissima, che saggia nell'una e nell'altra facoltà risplende di gemina laude, quasi di gemina luce, sarebbe degno giudice dell'ancor non decisa, ma per molti anni disputata precedenza delle lettere e dell'armi" (p.5). Having said so much, how could one possibly proceed to disparage either profession without offending the recipient of one's work? Not to give offence to anyone is the rule of the game; and the name is politeness, civil conversatione.

Amidst such civility and harmony, there is one rudely dissenting voice. It is that of Domenico Mora. Mora himself pays lip-service to the notion that a cavaliere must have some letters and some knowledge of what is necessary to his profession ("sapere quello che le si appartiene" - Cav., p.19). The cavaliere's true calling however is on the battlefield and letters should be to him like the expendable "frutti pretiosi e inzucherate vivande dopo il pasto" (p.20). Mora, like our other authors, also chooses a dedicatee for his Cavaliere who has had experience of both arms and letters. As a young man, on Mora's own account, Giovanni Zamoyski Azamosche served under the marquess of Marignano. He later went as a student to Padua University, where he was elected Rector and became a Doctor. He then returned to the call of arms and in due course was appointed Captain General and Grand Chancellor of the Kingdom of Poland. But what Mora expects of this man's experience is a

confirmation of his own view that arms have no equal: "ò tanta fede nella giustitia perfetta, che ho sempre conosciuta in lei, che non mancherà di spogliarsi del'amore, che pò havere più ad una professione che al'altra, o vero a tutte due, e che ne dirà sinceramente il parer suo, poi che il mondo tutto è sicuro, che la professione del'armi e delle lettere non è equale." Mora is asking him, in other words, to prejudge the issue. But there is hardly an issue to judge in fact, since the superiority of arms is so evident. It is as clear to Mora as the light of day, because "ho provato che l'armi realmente sono più nobilli delle lettere." As was pointed out earlier on, Mora's reasoning is entirely experiential, and if the works we have studied so far can in any way be considered as typical of the Renaissance, with their faith in authority and their belief in man's rationality, then Mora must undoubtedly be seen to represent what Hiram Haydn has termed the Counter-Renaissance, which rejected the teachings of past masters and whose "historical, political and ethical writers ... gave new and almost exclusive value to the evidence of 'fact' and pragmatic experience." [49] It is as the mouthpiece of that other culture that the Cavaliere sets out to counterattack Muzio's Gentilhuomo and everything for which it stood. Mora is in no doubt that there are two cultures, the one presided over by Aristotle, the other typified by Orlando: "se voi non sete della scola d'Aristotele - he tells Muzio - che sete leterato, che meno posso essere io, che varco le compagne a suono di tamburo, con leggere d'Orlando alcuna volta le novelle per passa tempo, senza pigliare la protetione da scrittori sicome fatte voi ancho, ma solamente dir il parer mio a campo aperto, come faccio hora, senza adulatione e con un stile soldatesco, voto d'ogni politezza e legiadria" (pp.56-7).

Mora is unhesitating in his condemnation of the other culture; but his accusation of it is ambivalent. He rejects the world of literature as sheer fantasy, yet

he is uncomfortably aware of the power of the word - and his decision to wield the pen is proof of that. Literary authority, we have seen, he holds of no account at all. Plato he accuses of "una balorderia ambitiosa" for claiming that philosophers should be kings, and of Cicero he says that his death was the just desert of his babbles: "sono tutte chiachiare de Cicerone, per non dire chiachiarone, che non havea che fare, salvo che con le parole a por fuogo di continuo nel Senato Romano, con la perversa lingua sua, che nel fine si portò il premio conveniente, che fu come un ribello mazacrato" (pp.223-4). Alongside with authority Mora discards reason, it being "proverbio commune, che la forza supera la ragione" (p.253). In other words he entirely rejects the idea, most clearly enunciated by Lapo da Castiglionchio, that it is knowledge which gives man his power to act, and that understanding is man's way of controlling his environment. Reasoning according to Mora simply creates a reality of its own, which has no bearing whatsoever upon the reality of events: "quello che con ragione si discorre nelle camere è cossí possibile al potterlo esequire perfettamente e senza molte difficultà nelle campagne, come è possibile a me, di propria potencia, a farmi Imperatore de Turchi" (pp.257-8). This is Mora's reply to the argument of the querelle that the "counsellor" is superior to the "executor", the letterato who advises on warfare nobler than the soldier who actually fights the war. Absurd though this argument may seem to Mora, he does not find it nearly as absurd however as the contention that a man-of-letters owes his eminence to the use of his intellect, where men-of-arms only use their body. We all use our intellects in what we do, is Mora's counter-claim, even the manigoldo , and there is no one, as far as Mora knows, who operates with his nose! Mora has no patience at all for what he sees as the sterile casuistry of his opponents. The distinction for instance between liberal and other arts is sheer nonsense: "né so io di liberali e non liberali, tutte diffinitioni fatte dalli

ambitiosi per pompegiar sopra gl'altri e havere la magioranza" (pp.15-16). More nonsensical still is Muzio's definition of nobility. To rebut it, Mora puts forward a theory which few modern Marxists would care to fault. All human beings, says Mora, are artigiani , including letterati , and it is only the "dominatori delle ricchezze" who possess true nobility, for only they can afford the privilege of not having to work, whilst being able to make anyone else work for them. And if true nobility equals riches, perfect nobility is riches combined with birth and ancestry. They who argue that nobility is generated by virtue and learning "devono esser' nati assai vilmente, e che per volere nobilitare la sua basezza, vogliono fare il nero comparire per bianco, volendosi con frotole e chiachiare farsi equali a quelli che sono di sangue nobile" (p.27).

Yet, for all his disparagement of letterati, Mora knows only too well that their power is great. That is why of course he is so obstrepęrous in his accusations. Their power though is a power for evil, which of course is all the more a reason for detesting and resenting them, lawyers, heretics, infidels and the lot. It is they who are responsible for all the ills of the world, and what greater proof could there be of their iniquity than the Reformation: "hor vedete, S. Mutio, che conditione è questa, nata da alcuni di quei vestri leterati, che tanto magnificate" (p.67). Personal experience it is, which has taught Mora to hate men-of-letters: "veggo li sette ottavi del mondo vivere senza letere con augumento di continuo e non senza l'altre professioni, e vedendo dove leterati praticano esser sempre in lite tutto" (pp.16-17). He is not writing as a dispassionate observer however, but as an injured party. He is fo⁄rty-nine years of age, "e li vostri leterati 30 anni mi hanno fatto littigare il mio" (p.151). He talks of "le molte perdite che ho fatt'io alle guerre e li danni che ho patiti da ladri servitori e da ingiusti

ministri de Prencipi" (p.129), and he mentions the injustices perpetrated against soldiers, some of whom are paid in debased currency and others who receive reduced wages by being made to serve "months" of thirty-six or forty-five days. He himself was obliged to seek his fortune as far afield as Muscovy, "e sempre vo di male in peggio consumando" (p.15). And as if to add insult to injury, his chastened honour is now piqued by Muzio's Gentilhuomo, who stands for all he despises in the native land he was made to relinquish and which has fallen prey to the machinations of letterati: "chi lo vuole provare, non s'ingolfi solamente nelle astutie delli studij della piciola Italia, ma vada atorno, ove le letere non comandano, che troverà il secol d'oro; sí che tolte via le scienze leterali, il tutto quietarebbe, e vivendo gl'huomini con le bone operationi naturali e con la santa fede, si salvariano" (p.17).

To ridicule his adversaries, Mora concludes the Cavaliere with a series of mock-syllogisms. Whilst parodying the form however, what he says, he means in earnest. One of the syllogisms claims that it was through the agency of cavaglieri that God offered redemption to erring mankind, since Christ was born of cavagliere stock. Man's deliverance from sin is therefore the gift of knighthood:

> Davit fu Re e fu Cavagliere:
> della casa di Davit nacque Christo:
> adunque de Cavaglieri naque Christo.
> La nostra salute nata è da Christo:
> Christo nacque in terra Dio e di Cavagliere:
> adunque la nostra salute è nata da Cavaglieri (p.285).

That Christ came as a knight was confirmed during the Harrowing of Hell, when his arrival in the underworld was announced with the words "questo è quel Signore forte, quel Signore pottente, quel Signore potente nelle battaglie" (p.288). If this then was God's design, no one can question the supremacy of cavaglieri without being suspect of heresy. And like Prassicio, Mora ends his harangue with a call to outlaw all those who dare disagree with him:

gl'angioli del cielo fino alle furie infernali publicano questa prima maggioranza essere de Cavalieri, e chi vi si oppone, doverebbe come suspeto di Heresia esser carcerato e fatto in publico abiurare, detestare e maledire l'oppinione che havea per inanci, che le lettere precessero di ragione al armi, perciò che negando la sentenza de gl'angioli datta alla presenza di Christo, che l'affirmò tacendo, viene di ragione ad essere scomunicato e ribello di Christo e de gl'angioli, e in consequenza di Dio (pp.287-8).

Here then is someone taking violent exception to the querelle just as it seemed to have become an innocuous game. Mora it is true bore a personal grudge against letterati and had quite a chip on his shoulder; his reaction therefore may not have been too typical. But how typical, one may ask, how true to real life is the picture painted by the other authors who, after all, must have broached the subject with as partial a mind as he, since letters were their trade just as arms were his? Could there be another picture concealed between the lines? Is the harmony and consensus they portray merely a façade? And conversely, how significant is the rivalry depicted during the early stages of the querelle? Who are the knights and doctors who contend for precedence? How frequently did they in fact measure swords and was their confrontation a domestic matter, as it were, or was it really the clash of two classes, a noblesse de robe and a noblesse d'épée? And what do these knights and doctors have in common with the soldati and the letterati, the huomini di cappa and the huomini di robba lunga of the later Cinquecento? To answer these and other questions relating to a span of three centuries or more is an almost impossible task and would require many years of painstaking and more specifically historical research. They will therefore have to remain unanswered until such time as research of that kind is undertaken. Nevertheless, there is a certain amount of information regarding the social political and historical context in which the querelle unfolded, which may be gathered from the texts themselves. In our next chapter we will attempt to assess the nature of this information, and to compare it with what little external evidence is available to date.

Chapter V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE QUERELLE

We can attempt to gauge the significance of the querelle in historical, social and political terms from the information provided by the texts themselves, but there would be no point in pursuing the investigaion more thoroughly, if it were not possible in the first place to establish how "real" the querelle was; whether in other words incidents of disputed precedence between knights and doctors (and *letterati* and *soldati*) did actually occur and whether they occurred more than intermittently. One would also have to find out of course whether they were peculiar to certain towns or regions of Italy and whether such towns and regions issued legislation on the matter. This in itself is bound to be a mammoth task, but it needs to be done, for the information available to date is patchy and inconsistent. One might choose initially to focus one's attention on one particular city. Bologna would be an obvious choice, given its centrality in the issue. That is where the problem was first debated, and the prestige of its university must have given a special edge to the conflict of knights and doctors. But since it was precisely the presence of a university, and therefore of large numbers of doctors, which must have made the issue a particularly contentious one (with the authorities likely to have been inclined to give preferential treatment to those who fostered the renown of the city), Bologna may not have been a typical case, and one would therefore want to compare it to cities which did not have a university. It has in fact been suggested by Gaetano Salvemini that, unlike other cities, university towns such as Bologna, Perugia and Siena did, on account of their university, grant precedence to doctors over knights. Salvemini cites a Bolognese provision of September 15th 1301, which stipulates that in ceremonies and processions doctors must follow immediately upon the *Podestà*, the Captain and the *Anziani* and be followed by the *milites* and other "proceres civitatis".[1] This provision is also quoted by Fitting who, in so doing, raises the question of the chicken and the egg, with his

suggestion that Bartolus and other lawyers may have taken their cue from this and similar legislation in their handling of the querelle.[2] This question too would demand careful attention. Was the querelle born as a result of cities legislating on the matter or was legislation (if it existed) the sequel of the querelle? Or did they proceed hand in hand as a consequence of disputed precedence and litigation? A further point to investigate in this connection would be the extent to which, if at all, Roman law was taken into account in the formulation of laws and statutes on the matter, and more interesting still, whether or not it was considered relevant to the process of administering justice. In Bologna for instance, did the oft-cited "Lex de professoribus qui in urbe Constantinopolitana docentes ex lege meruerint comitivam" (see above p.38) have force of law? Was a professor who had held a chair for twenty years really deemed to have thereby become noble? And if he was, what good did it do to him? This raises yet another question: that of the gap between intention and practice, or between legislation and custom. If there was a statute in Bologna which granted precedence to doctors, why should a disillusioned Petronio Zagni say to Bernardino Gozzadini in Beccadelli's Disputatione: "precedete, poi che non vel veda / la prava abusion de questa terra" (see above p.19)? Might the situation have changed from year to year or from regime to regime, "ch'a mezzo novembre non giugne quel che tu d'ottobre fili"? A century or so later, on the evidence of Nobile in Muzio's Gentilhuomo, the tables had turned in favour of doctors again. Nobile praises the laws ("ordini") of Bologna which on most occasions give the right of precedence to doctors. At the same time however he criticizes what he calls the abuse ("abuso") in Italy of giving priority to knights (see above p.249). He does not say whether this abuse extended to Bologna, but if it did, her laws were clearly not being respected, and there was clearly a discrepancy between what was and what ought to

have been. Whatever may have been the particular situation of Bologna, there was no doubt in Muzio's mind, no more than there was in the minds of most of the authors in this study, that in absolute terms the law was on the side of doctors and that by claiming precedence knights were being usurpers. The logical conclusion of this argument is that there must have been a time when doctors enjoyed uncontested pre-eminence. It is Bernardo da Castiglionchio, the uncle of Lapo, who voices this belief most articulately, in his letter to Lapo the elder, where he bemoans the customs of the "corrotto mondo d'oggi" which allow knights to have precedence over doctors (see above chapter I, n.67). Before the world was "corrupted" therefore things must have been different. One could of course simply dismiss this as fanciful harking back to a mythical golden age, but it does compel us to query an assumption which would appear to have gone unquestioned so far by those scholars who have dealt with the problem of precedence and knighthood (scholars whose names appear in the course of this chapter). It is their implicit assumption that it was the doctors who, by challenging the position of knights, were the first to upset the status quo, for knights were a social reality of longer and higher standing. In a way the assumption is justifiable, if one considers that knighthood (and feudalism) began to evolve in the early centuries of the Middle Ages, following the disintegration of the Roman Empire, whereas doctors, being an urban phenomenon, only came to the scene much later. But it is precisely in an urban context that the querelle unfolded, and knights probably joined that context as outsiders and intruders (depending of course on how one defines them). The doctors may well have had a case therefore in claiming that things were no longer what they used to be, and the point certainly deserves further investigation.

If one were, for the sake of more detailed research, to focus one's attention initially on Bologna,

one would have two particularly interesting leads to follow. The first is the mention of the public disputation held on the subject of precedence under Taddeo de' Pepoli (see above p.47). The mere fact of this disputation having taken place (if indeed it did take place), would be a sign of how important the matter was considered to be. But if there were more circumstantial evidence of the debate and its contents, we would no doubt be in possession of many answers to our many questions. The second lead to follow is the one provided by Beccadelli's Disputatione. The episode he recounts did presumably take place, since he is hardly likely to have invented a story about real people (including his dedicatee) and to have set it so close in time to the date of publication as to make it an obvious untruth to anyone but slightly informed. If it did take place though, was the case then pursued, as the speakers threaten, in the courts of law? And in particular, did it end up before the Sacra Rota in Rome (see above p.19)? This would naturally take us beyond the confines of Bologna, but it would afford a good opportunity to compare the customs of two different cities, and to investigate whether canon lawyers also had an opinion on the matter (for the querelle seems to have been the brainchild of civil lawyers), and to test Guazzo's contention that, alone of all cities, Rome gave precedence to the toga over the spada (see above p.250).

The city for which we have most external evidence so far is Florence. It is however rather contradictory or at least ambiguous evidence and would require detailed examination before we were in a position to make positive inferences from it. What it does suggest though is that rules concerning ceremonial precedence did not necessarily apply to other circumstances. The consensus of modern opinion seems to be that knights were entitled to walk at the head of Florentine processions, and that lawyers would have to follow them

and be followed in turn by merchants and notaries.[3] Salvemini for his part maintains that Florentine knights were generally more privileged than Florentine doctors, but this would not appear to have been uniformly the case.[4] While some laws made more concessions to knights, others made the same to both knights and doctors. Only one horse could follow the hearse of a doctor, whereas two could follow the hearse of a knight. On the other hand both knights and doctors (and judges too) could have their coffins draped in cloth of gold.[5] It may be wrong however to view the situation simply in terms of black and white, and if a case of disputed precedence submitted for arbitration to Grand Duke Cosimo I in 1565 is in any way typical, then it is true, as Mora said (see above p.251), that there were different categories of knighthoods and that not all had the same rights. The submission to Cosimo concerns "le cause della precedenza fra Messer Giovan Batista Concini Dottore di Legge in l'una e l'altra facultà da una, e Messer Lodovico Masi Cavaliere di Sant' Iacopo dall'altra", and it contains a summary of the evidence heard by the Magistrato Supremo in its sitting of December 26th 1565.[6] According to the opinion of legal experts, doctorhood, it is said, is superior to knighthood: "il grado del Dottorato, per la dignità e splendore che tiene, attesa la disposizione di ragione e comune sentenza degli scrittori iuris periti, si antepone al grado del Cavaliere per molti fondamenti li quali per brevità non si racontano." It is the Florentine custom however, and has been for a long time, that knights should precede doctors: "in Bologna, in Perugia e in altre città d'Italia, dove non sia uso o consuetudine in contrario, li Dottori precedono alli Cavalieri conforme alle regole di ragione. Ma in questa città di Fiorenza per antica consuetudine e osservanza gli Cavalieri precedono alli Dottori." Local tradition notwithstanding, the Magistrato Supremo pronounces in favour of Giovan Batista Concini. It does not do so however because he is a doctor, but simply

because Lodovico Masi cannot be considered a true knight in strictly Florentine terms. Although the Knights of St. James are "illustri e ordinati anticamente dal Re Cattolico e instituti da Sommi Pontefici", their knighthood, like other foreign knighthoods, is not recognized by the city of Florence unless it has been officially re-confirmed by the authorities:

> un cittadino fiorentino fatto Cavaliere dal Re di Francia, dall'Imperadore o dal Papa, se voleva a valersi del grado, supplicava di essere approvato e ammesso per Cavaliere, e ottenendo faceva entrata solenne a cavallo con suoi stendardi e livree, servitori e gran comitiva di nobili, e si rappresentava al Palazzo e s'inginocchiava al Supremo Magistrato, e fatte alcune cirimonie visitava gli Capitani di Parte, e da quel Magistrato in segno di approbatione riceveva certe insegne; e in questa guisa fu Cavaliere Mes. Ipolito Buondelmonti, Mes. Pietro Alamanni, Mes. Simone Tornabuoni, Mes. Luigi della Stufa e molti altri, e ultimamente Mes. Antonio Guidotti, che tornò d'Inghilterra Cavaliere, fu dal Duca Nostro Signore e suoi Magnifici Consiglieri, servate le prenarrate solennità, ammesso e approvato.

Since Lodovico Masi had not observed these formalities, he was not to be granted precedence over Giovan Batista Concini, who in any case, as well as being a doctor, was a knight of the Order of St. Stephen, which had been founded by Cosimo and which was therefore a truly Florentine order. By virtue of that knighthood alone Concini was entitled to precedence over Masi. Cosimo accepted the arguments of the Magistrato Supremo and Concini therefore won the case. But he won it by default as it were, not as a doctor but as a genuine knight against a fake knight. In this respect the document is very illuminating. It shows us of what little account doctors were really held in Florence. Local custom was against them and there was probably strong prejudice against them as well. To argue the case of a doctor, the Magistrato Supremo had to make him out to be a knight, and it opted not to present the "comune sentenza degli scrittori iuris periti" to Cosimo, preferring instead to concentrate on the point which was likely to carry greater weight with him, namely that Concini was a member of the

order of which he, Cosimo, was Grand Master. That argument however is produced at the very end of the submission, as though the Magistrato Supremo had first wanted to make it quite clear that doctors had the backing of the law. For the sake of brevity it refrained from listing the "molti fondamenti" which explained the legal rights of doctors, but it nevertheless pointed out that these fondamenti existed (no doubt they were the very same ones we have come accross in the querelle). It also felt compelled to mention that Florentine custom, unlike that of other cities, was not "conforme alle regole di ragione". As a result the submission sounds just as much like a general plea to Cosimo to overturn Florentine tradition in favour of the rights of doctors, as it is a report on the particular case of Giovan Batista Concini and Lodovico Masi. The prejudice against doctors (and learning) to which it seemingly bears witness, brings back to mind the complaints of Lapo da Castiglionchio, Leon Battista Alberti and Giovanni d'Arezzo against the Philistinism of Florentines, and would tend to suggest that very little had changed in the course of a century. What the document also suggests, and which is even more interesting, is that, in the Florentine context at least, the rules which applied to ceremony did not necessarily apply to other circumstances. The Magistrato Supremo mentions, without any sense of disapproval, the case of Florentines knighted abroad, who exercise within Florence the privileges attached to knighthood, such as the creation of notaries and the legitimization of bastards, but who nevertheless cannot claim precedence over doctors, because their title has not been ratified by the city authorities. This would confirm the suspicion one may have had upon reading the texts of the querelle, that what was at stake was simply a question of ceremonial precedence, of who was allowed to talk, sit or walk in front of whom.

The distiction between local and foreign knighthoods was not particular to Florence. In 1463 the

College of Doctors of the city of Alessandria had complained to their overlord Francesco Sforza that swarms of young and recently dubbed knights were usurping the rights of precedence to which doctors were legally entitled. More than the youth and newness of these knights however, it was the fact that they had acquired their knighthoods in far-off places which the doctors expressely objected to: "cum dicti tales milites, qui in dicta civitate Alessandriae pullulant, in provinciis alienis e longinquis militias ipsas et gradus sumpserint." [7] They therefore petitioned Francesco Sforza to ensure that the rules which pertained in other parts of his territories, and at Pavia in particular, be enforced in Alessandria as well. The rules of Pavia did not actually grant wholesale precedence to doctors, but at least they made sure that precedence was bestowed on the basis of seniority. They stipulated "ne quis miles junior antiquiorem doctorem antecedat, sed secundum tempora graduum adeptorum, ita ut antiquitati gradus dignitatis deferatur." Here again the question seems to have been one of straightforward ceremonial precedence. The doctors were simply concerned that no one should try and jump the queue. At times there could also be rows over seating arrangements. Pius II, in his Commentaries, mentions the rumpus which the scramble for seats caused at the Diet of Mantua: "cum iam legati regum principumque convenire coepissent, magna de sedibus orta contentio est; nec reges regibus, nec duces ducibus cedere, locum sibi quisque in consessu primum arrogare verbis nutibusque contendere; quod ne rebus gerendis officeret, Pontifex legum edidit, ne vel postpositi detrimentum vel praelati lucrum honoris iurisve aliquod ferrent; nec tamen hoc pacto pacari omnes potuere." [8] Pius, it is true, makes no allusion to knights and doctors, but if any were present, they are likely also to have joined in the fray, accustomed as they were to fighting over such issues, and the story of the genesis of Biondo's Borsus (see above p.65) thus becomes quite plausible. There would appear

to have been a similar dispute at the Council of Basle in 1431, though specifically involving knights and doctors, and legend has it that Emperor Sigismund resolved it in favour of the doctors by pronouncing that it was easy for anyone to create one hundred knights in the space of a day, but that it was impossible even in a thousand years to create a doctor. [9]

All the evidence we have adduced so far concerns the north of Italy, and apart from a Florentine sumptuary law, it does not deal with anything more substantial than ceremonial precedence. Can it be a coincidence, one therefore wonders, that the two pieces of evidence which point to a conflict over weightier matters - tax-exemption and administration of justice - should hail from the south of Italy where, as we have seen, the querelle went through its liveliest phase? Further evidence would hardly have been necessary to prove how real the conflict was in the Kingdom of Naples - Galateo, Acquaviva, Nifo and Prassicio demonstrated it quite convincingly - and it must be admitted that the evidence which is about to be adduced is not of the type one would want to accept too uncritically. Nevertheless it deserves to be quoted, if only to provide an initial clue as to how the rivalry between men-of-arms and men-of-letters (which we have mainly seen so far as an ideological rivalry) could manifest itself in more concrete forms. During the reign of Queen Joanna I (1343-82), "essendo nata controversia tra Nobili e Letterati della città di Bitonto circa il pagamento delle reali impositioni, i Letterati dimandavan di contribuire co' Nobili, perché sempre nobilmente havean vissuto. La Reina Giovanna I, intesa la lor giusta domanda, gli separa dal Popolo, ordinando che con la Nobiltà contribuiscano le collette, dicendo che 'plus valet nobilitas morum quam genitorum'." [10] A century or so later, professional lawyers were appointed to sit on the court of appeal in Naples, and the nobility having

protested, the King found himself obliged to appoint some of their members as well.[11] Nobili may not sound exactly like men-of-arms and letterati not quite like professional men, but we only need to recall Galateo to realize that that is precisely what they were. What is particularly intriguing is the suggestion that Queen Joanna accepted the notion of letterato as the definition of a particular class, and this raises the question as to whether there existed a socially and legally recognizable noblesse de robe in Naples besides a noblesse d'épée. Galateo, to whom the question of nobility (legitimate and illegitimate) was of pressing concern, would seem to suggest that there was, but this is a point which obviously requires further investigation and to which we shall shortly be reverting, as we try to find out who exactly the knights and doctors, the men-of-arms and men-of-letters were. What we have sought so far was to establish, with the help of our limited resources, whether the querelle was a social reality as well as a literary reality. If we put the various bits of external evidence alongside the information provided by our texts (the Florentine bigotry, for instance, which is the butt of Lapo's Comparatio, the Veronese backdrop to Lanfranchino's Tractatulus, the "class" conflict which is the setting of Galateo's, Acquaviva's and Nifo's works, the two cultures idenfified by Mora and the numerous references to the question of disputed precedence in the later Cinquecento), it does appear as though the querelle in its literary form was indeed the reflection of some kind of competition taking place within society at large, but where and when this conflict was most accute and under what circumstances it arose are obviously problems which will only be solved by further research.

Once the social reality of the querelle has been ascertained, the next step ought to be an assessment of its significance. This would mean finding out the identity of the contestants. We know that initially

at least they were knights and doctors, but can we tell who exactly these knights and doctors were? Doctors do not seem to have attracted the attention of scholars so far and no one has attempted to give a reply to the question of Biondo, "quis autem primus fuerit, qui modum vel potius artificium doctorandi et doctores auro ornandi adinvenerit?" (see above p.70). Knighthood on the other hand has caused many headaches to many generations of scholars. Regrettably however most of the work which has been done on the subject concerns France, and even there the picture is still very blurred and opinions still divided. A recent article has pointed out how the thinking on the matter has latterly tended to revert to square one.[12] But even that is a progress of sorts, for it confirms that the initial hypotheses were probably the correct ones. In this instance the initial hypotheses were those of Marc Bloch, the first person seriously to investigate the origins and significance of knighthood.[13] Bloch argued that knighthood, which was originally the description of the social function and position of an individual and was always loosely equated with the idea of nobility, became in the course of time not only a strict synonym of nobility but the actual definition of nobility, the dubbing ceremony being regarded as the seal of an individual's membership of that group and later, when for various reasons dubbing had fallen into disuse, the inherit/ed right to being dubbed (whether or not the actual ceremony was performed) still being retained as the distinctive mark of a nobleman. By that time knighthood was no longer determined by the personal status of an individual, but by a collective status: it was the hereditary attribute of a class. A later stage in the development of the concept of knighthood was its acquisition of a sacred character (i.e. its transformation into chivalry) through the intervention of the Church, and then its legal definition. One meaning however which knighthood had carried from the very beginning and which it never ceased to convey was that of warrior (on horse-

back). A knight in France therefore, according to Bloch, by the latter Middle Ages - by the time that is when the querelle was getting off the ground in Italy - was the male scion of the upper class of society, whose hereditary raison d'être was to be armed and fight (in the service of the Prince, the Faith and the Commonweal). The closing of the nobility's ranks in the name of knighthood took place, as Bloch sees it, under the threat of a rising class of nouveaux riches buying its way into fiefs and other traditional preserves of the military aristocracy. This aristocracy therefore rallied around what it felt was its most distinctive feature: knighthood. By then the sense of caste was becoming so strong, that it did not matter any longer whether or not one was a knight oneself (i.e. whether or not one had been dubbed). The important thing was to be a descendant of knights. If one enjoyed this privilege, there was very little which could deprive one of it; but there was one profession which was deemed to be especially incompatible with high rank. This was not trade, interestingly enough, but agricultural labour. The rule preventing knights from becoming tradesmen was imposed on them by certain urban statutes aimed at protecting the monopoly of merchant communities, according to Bloch, and was not a rule which the aristocracy inflicted upon itself. Having become an hereditary privilege, knighthood was as difficult to acquire (in theory at least) as it was to lose, and strictly speaking only the supreme lord, the king of France, had the right to create new knights. This was a right of which French kings availed themselves more and more frequently, as it served their policies or could fill their coffers, Philip the Fair (1268-1314) having been the first monarch to turn knighthood into a saleable commodity. Where the central authority was weak, dubbing rights would be usurped by or handed over to lesser authorities. This happened in the south of France for instance, before the king's sway had reached that far. It is also a phenomenon which was perceptible in the Empire and parts of Italy. The commune of Florence for example

- and still according to Bloch - possessed the right as early as 1260. It would seem on the whole to have been more freely used in Italy than anywhere else, and German barons whose opinion is referred by Bishop Otto of Freising (1111/14 - 58), were shocked to see how easily knighthoods were distributed there to "men in trades and crafts". [14] This is one of the very few points which Bloch makes about Italy in his work which is to all intents and purposes on French feudal society, but it is a point of great interest in the context of this study, where we have seen so many nouveaux riches denounced for masquerading as knights.

In more recent years another Frenchman, Georges Duby, has excavated more minutely in the field originally surveyed by Bloch. [15] Unfortunately his research is also concerned almost exclusively with France, but it can still make a useful point of comparison for the knights of the querelle. Like Bloch, Duby sees miles - which originally had a purely technical meaning, that of armed horseman (in some documents ordo militaris and ordo equestris are used as equivalents, and in the south of France caballarius was a synonym of miles) - replacing at first vassus and in due course nobilis, and so becoming an hereditary quality instead of a personal distinction. But the question which Duby asks is why the aristocracy accepted that particular definition of itself. What particular idea did the notion of miles convey? His searches revealed that from a very early date the specifically military meaning of miles ceased to be the most important and was superseded by the idea of service which the word implied and which it had in fact borne from late Roman times. It is thus that miles came to replace vassus to describe the social function and position of an individual. The next stage, which was the identification of knighthood and nobility, happened, according to Duby, not under the threat of a rising bourgeoisie, as Bloch had claimed, but as a result of the ideological influence of the Church, which fostered the concept of a tripartite

division of society into *orantes*, *laborantes* and *bellatores* or *pugnatores*. At first the warriors were referred to by the Church precisely as *bellatores* or *pugnatores* and not *milites*, because *miles* suggested serving more than it did fighting. In the course of time however and with the decline of royal authority, especially in certain parts of France, those ordained for war came to be seen by the Church as royal substitutes providing an essential *service* to the commonweal, namely to protect the *orantes* and the *laborantes*, i.e. truly to *militare*. It was then that knighthood, with its more exalted connotations, became a possible definition of nobility, and the nobles readily accepted it, because they recognised it to be their common denominator. Whether big or small, rich or not so rich, what bound them together and set them apart from the rest of society was the fact that they served under arms, that they were *milites* in other words. By the thirteenth century, according to Duby, the members of the nobility were consistently being described as *milites* and it was the dubbing rite which set the seal upon an individual's membership of that class. This is the picture which Duby draws for France. For the Empire he points out that the synonymity of nobility and knighthood was accepted only very reluctantly, if at all. About Spain, England and more important still, Italy, he has nothing to say, since, as he points out, there have been no studies of knighthood in those countries.

This is a point which is confirmed by as recent a work as Lauro Martines's *Power and Imagination*, in which the author shows an awareness of the problematic identity of knights but demonstrates some confusion in his own acceptation of the notion. His section on the nobility begins as follows:

> historians are not in agreement about the nature and identity of the urban nobility. Was it a closed or an open caste? A class in decline or one which reformed and revitalized itself by means of shrewd marriages and commercial enterprise? Was it a nobility of birth,

claiming past or present feudal jurisdictions on the basis of an imperial act or an act of enfeoffment by an imperial agent? Or was it a nobility based upon old wealth and public service? To what extent did noblemen go into commerce or refrain from it altogether? Was there a distinction inside the city between a municipal aristocracy and an urban-warrior nobility, or between an older urban nobility and one more recently arrived from the country? Was knighthood a social or a military order? Did mounted combat itself confer noble status? Or was nobility a state of mind: wealth and prowess combined with lordly ways and the qualities of leadership? The stilnovisti, the idealist poets of Dante's generation (c.1280-1310), held that nobility resided in virtue, in a 'gentle heart', but theirs was a moral posture and a social subtlety. No one believed them. 16

A few pages later, again summing up the historians his predecessors, he maintains that "nobility and knights tend to be seen as one and the same class, so also popolo and foot soldiers" (p.55). At times it is as though he himself accepts the identity of nobility and knighthood, when he talks for instance of the economic situation of the nobility in the face of the growing power of the popolo: "piracy, profitable public office, exploitative investment in the public debt, and war loot saved and maintained many a nobleman. These were the knight's reply, so to speak, to the sources of dramatic profit (long-distance trade and usury) tapped by the order of rich merchants and merchant bankers" (p.63). At other times he clearly makes a distinction between knighthood and nobility, or at least between knighthood and the rest of the nobility. Talking of the social fabric of the early commune, he says that "the nobility stood at the social forefront of the eleventh-century cities: bishop, resident feudal magnates, episcopal clergy, the principal knights, and the array of their surrounding kinsmen. ... The principal knights - captains and vavasors - composed the larger part of the nobility" (p.11). He is also suggesting in this passage that knights and vassals were one and the same thing; but earlier he had talked of the propertied class of "vassals and subvassals, knights, small landowners, and random or itinerant country merchants" (p.5). On another occasion he speaks of

"leading knights", "petty knights" and "knightlings" (see p.6 for instance), thereby giving the impression that the notion of knighthood is more a handy metaphor for the use of historians than it is an accurate description of a social reality. And yet what clearly emerges from the pages of Martines's study, especially when he adduces documentary evidence, is not only that knights did of course exist, but that they existed as a socially and legally identifiable group. From very early on, it would seem, there were orders and associations of knights. At Brescia, for instance, there is reported to have been a clash between the guilds and the order of knights in 1196, and one at Piacenza in 1198 and another at Milan between 1198 and 1201 (p.49). At Pavia, by the early thirteenth century, there were three recognized political orders: the knights, the popolo and the notaries, each with its own podestà and council of advisers (p.87). At Verona in 1227 communal offices, which had previously been restricted to knights, were made available to rich burghers, that is to men who had assets of one thousand pounds or more and who owned a horse and arms (p.59). And in Florence "the old association of Florentine knights" was liquidated in the 1250's (p.65). This information, when put together with the information provided by Bloch regarding the concession to the Florentine commune in 1260 of the right to create knights, raises the question of the virtue by which one was a knight. Was knighthood the personal distinction of an individual or the hereditary attribute of a class, or did it, as in France, develop from being the one to being the other? And to what extent was knighthood a legal reality? For these questions Martines does not have an answer, but he does appear to take for granted that a knight was, and perhaps had to be, a warrior: he was a man with horse and arms. Martines does not say however that these were attributes which the nobility as a whole came to regard as its specific qualifications. Therefore not all Italian noblemen of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance,

as far as one can judge from the evidence adduced by Martines, were knights, but every knight, it would seem, was a nobleman.

This would appear at first sight to be quite inconsistent with the evidence of the querelle. If there is one thing on which all our authors agree and about which they are all adamant it is that knights are not noblemen, certainly not by virtue of their knighthood. Following the lead given by Bartolus (see above p.29), who had asked "utrum miles habeat dignitatem" and answered with an emphatic non , [17] Roman lawyers were positive in their assertion that knighthood could not confer nobility, and there is no way therefore in which they would ever have defined nobility as knighthood, neither the nobility (the personal merit) of an individual nor the nobility (the pedigree) of a family, and especially not the latter. The querelle on the whole explicit/ly repudiates the notion of an inherited and inheritable nobility, and instead proclaims the idea of an individual and self-made nobility: "qui meruit sua virtute nobilitatem habere, magis dicitur nobilis, quam ille, qui descendit ex nobili genere" (see above p.29). It is the doctor of course who is the perfect embodiment of this type of nobility, but even if the knight cannot hope to achieve such perfection, he nevertheless has to rely on his own devices. Birth is not one of the requisites of knighthood (see above p.29). On the other hand bearing arms is (at least a sword), together with a readiness to use them in combat. On this point there would seem to be some agreement between the authors of the querelle and modern historians. It is true however that modern historians hold it for a fact that knights were armed. The querelle on the other hand suggests that many of them may not have been, for almost every text insists that knights ought to be armed, and implies that those who passed as knights were in any case not real knights. They may have carried a sword, but they probably

did not know how to wield it. Knights were also supposed to know how to ride and to own a horse, according to modern historians. To Bloch, Duby, Martines and others it goes without saying that a knight was a horseman, since that was his very definition (chevalier, cavaliere), and judging from the evidence of the querelle, one would be bound to confirm this assumption: miles and eques, milite and cavaliere are used as synonyms. The one privilege moreover of which Roman lawyers are careful not to deprive the knights their contemporaries is the right to wear the golden spurs after which they were named ("equites aurati"). If they wore spurs, we must take it that they put them to some use, although they could very well have worn them for the mere sake of display, and may not therefore have had to own a horse and be able to ride. As the ownership of a horse never becomes an issue in the querelle (indeed it never so much as receives a mention), it is difficult from that evidence alone to form an opinion on the matter, but one thing is sure and that is that the ownership of a horse and the ability to ride are not amongst the conditions of knighthood as stipulated by Accursius and accepted by his successors. This is in such fundamental contrast with everything which has been said and known so far about knighthood, that it must prompt us to question whether the Roman lawyers of the Middle Ages were in touch with the reality of the environment in which they lived or whether they were shut in a world of their own left over from the days of ancient Rome. It is impossible of course that they should have been totally shielded from what went on about them, and all suppositions about knights and knighthood will therefore need to be re-examined in the light of their pronouncements. Certainly if it is a legal definition of knighthood in Italy which we are ultimately looking for, theirs is not evidence which can be dismissed out of hand.

If the Golden Knights did not ride and did not fight, what did they do? "Vadunt quotidie per plateas

et vacant negociationibus et mercantijs", is the answer which emerges clearly from every text and commentary, and not just of the fifteenth century but of earlier centuries as well.[18] It is no wonder that they could afford to buy the golden spurs which, as Biondo informs us (see above p.72), were available to the highest bidder. None of our authors, surprisingly enough, ventured to make a pun on the name "equites aurati", but there is little doubt that it was the speciousness of their knighthoods at which the main thrust of the querelle was aimed. They were not genuine knights but, as has repeatedly been stressed, dubbed merchants and nouveaux riches, and since the very first of Accursius's knightly conditions was "ut miles non sit negotiator", the lawyers were quite simply doing their duty in unmasking false pretences. One cannot help but wonder however whether the lawyers themselves may not have been pretending and whether there was not more to knighthood than they liked to admit. After all they were not averse themselves to displaying the title of "eques auratus" (Homodeis, Bolognini and Lanfranchino all did it), and even though Accursius had not said anything about doctors not becoming knights or knights not becoming doctors, their doctorial skills can hardly have qualified them for knighthood as they themselves had defined it. They may have argued that in any case Golden Knights were not and could not be knights in the true sense of the word and that there was no harm therefore in assuming that title even if one did not satisfy the legal requirements of knighthood, or they may have claimed that they were in fact doing knighthood a favour by associating it with their own name, since "ubi militia adderetur viro habenti dignitatem, et sic adderetur dignitati, utputa est quidem doctor qui postea efficitur miles" (see avove p.57). But why did they bother? Why were they not content with their own title? Did they not manage to convince themselves that doctorhood was the highest dignity to which one could aspire? Did they not believe that it was their own merit which

made them nobler than others, without needing to seek recognition in the eyes of the public? That is what their assumption of the title of knighthood seems to have been: a public demonstration of their eminence. But if that is indeed what it was (and the eagerness of merchants to be knighted tends to suggest that it was), then, despite the doctors' insistence to the contrary, knighthood must have been seen at the time as the equivalent of nobility, and knight must in people's consciousness have been a synonym of nobleman. In this case the querelle would tend to confirm rather than invalidate, as at first seemed likely, the hypothesis of Martines and others regarding the identity of knighthood and nobility. Nevertheless a great deal of research still remains to be done in order to establish whether this identity was formally recognized, at least in certain quarters, since it was quite definitely not accepted as such by Roman lawyers, and if it was, when the process of identification began and when it was completed. In other words no less remains to be investigated than the entire history of knighthood in Italy. An implicit, and sometimes less than implicit assumption of the querelle, is that there were two types of knights in Italy, genuine and fake, the genuine ones being those who were truly armed and really did know how to fight, and the fake ones those who had bought their title and were in fact merchants by profession. In France too, as we saw, knighthoods were put on sale, but this would seem to have been a more common phenomenon in Italy and one of longer standing. Certainly as far back as the querelle stretches, there is evidence that knighthood was a purchasable commodity. It may be in fact that the querelle stretched back as far as the time when knighthoods first began to be traded wholesale and that it therefore represents the conflict within an urban context of two new social groups, merchants and "bureaucrats", competing for nobility, i.e. for the right to lead and rule. If this were so, its title would be somewhat misleading, since it opposed not the pen to the

sword but the pen to the florin.

One cannot say whether the merchants who became knights and who were apparently so keen on displaying their golden spurs, also wore a sword, even though they may not have known how to wield it. It is certainly one of Accursius's conditions that a knight be girt with a sword, "quod ei ensis cingatur", and sword and knighthood therefore, even to Roman lawyers, were seen to be inextricably linked. It was the same in France, where a knight without a sword, according to Bloch and Duby, would have been as unthinkable as a knight without a horse. But whereas the horse was more of a status symbol, the sword had acquired an almost sacred character. It was by being girt with a sword, in the course of the dubbing ceremony, that a man was lifted to the rank of knight. The dubbing ceremony was therefore the initiation rite into knighthood. Both Bloch and Duby insist on the crucial role of dubbing in the development of knighthood from a loosely defined position and profession to a rigid caste, even though Duby admits that "l'histoire de l'adoubement ... reste tout entière à écrire." [19] The dubbing ceremony became in due course the only gateway to the closed ranks of the nobility, a nobleman being a dubbed man or a man with the hereditary right to be dubbed. In Italy Accursius and those who quote him also allude to some sort of ceremony which the candidate has to go through in order to receive formal recognition as a knight, but it sounds more like a test than a rite, and more secular in nature than sacred. The aspirant, it is true, is made to swear an oath. However he is not dubbed but "examined" ("quod examinetur"), not initiated but "registered" ("in numero aliorum debet poni et scribi"). What actually happened during this ceremony and whether it was in fact ever performed, is unknown. These are only the words of Accursius, and even though they may be frequently cited, no one ever goes into the kind of details about the ceremony of knighting which

Homodeis provides on the conferment of doctorates (see above pp. 26-7). No one provides any information either as to the significance which may have attached to the knighting ceremony, but since the conditions of Accursius are usually enlisted to demonstrate the military nature of knighthood and confirm the non-eligibility of merchants rather than to draw attention to the ceremony itself, it may be surmized (assuming of course that the words of the Roman lawyers are reliable evidence as to what went on around them) that dubbing never acquired the solemnity in Italy which it had in France. Certainly if knighthoods were as readily available as it would seem they were, there cannot have been much mystery about dubbing. But if it is true of France, it must be even more so of Italy that "l'histoire de l'adoubement reste tout entière à écrire."

As well as the question of who was eligible for knighthood, dubbing raises the question of who had the right to create new knights. Given the extremely complex political structure of Italy during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, with its numerous and conflicting sources of authority, both within the peninsula at large and within individual cities or states, the answer to this question is likely to be just as intricate. The submission alone of the Magistrato Supremo to Cosimo I de' Medici (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) shows us how complicated the situation indeed was. It mentions no less than five grantors of knighthood which are recognized or potentially recognizable by the Florentine authorities: the Grand Duke himself as Grand Master of the order of St. Stephen, the Spanish King as Grand Master of the Order of St. James, the King of France, the Emperor and the Pope. This evidence admittedly belongs to the later phase of the period with which we are dealing, but it is nonetheless revealing that at a time when the political situation of the country was more stable and more ordered, there were still so many possible

dispensers of knighthood. It is easy therefore to imagine how much more variety there must have been in earlier centuries. At the end of the fifteenth century we have the case of the Bolognese Bernardino Gozzadini knighted in Ferrara by the Duke of Ferrara (see above p.20), and a few years earlier of Ilicino knighted in the very same city by Emperor Frederick III (see above p.107). Bloch mentions that in 1260 the commune of Florence acquired the right (presumably from the Emperor) to bestow knighthoods, and Martines speaks of the knightly orders which existed in every city-state during the later Middle Ages. These orders, which were obviously something quite different from the chivalric orders of the time of Cosimo I, would have been contemporary with the early phase of the querelle of Knights and Doctors and it may have been them which Accursius had in mind when he stipulated that a knight "in numero aliorum debet poni et scribi." Very little would appear to be known about them either. Were they chartered and self-regulating organizations with the right to admit (i.e. knight) new members and possibly to expel non-conforming ones, or were they simply loosely-defined kinship groups or "professional" associations to which men belonged who were already knights, however they may have become so? These are yet further questions which remain to be investigated, but what the evidence we have to date does suggest, with its emphasis on knights as individuals, is that knighthood in Italy, unlike France, was and remained a personal status. One was not <u>born</u> into knighthood, one <u>became</u> a knight. What made Gozzadini special for instance in the eyes of Beccadelli, was the fact that he had been knighted by the Duke of Ferrara in recognition of his personal merits:

> el Gozadin è molto più perfecto
> che l'altri cavalier e de più orgulio.
> Intendo che, fra mille, el fu già electo
> in Milite dal Duca de Ferrara
> pel più prestante, generoso e accepto (vv.428-32).

There is another major difference between knighthood as it transpires from the pages of the querelle and knighthood as it is said to have evolved in France. The ideological motivations of knighthood in the querelle are neither those of feudalism nor those of chivalry; they do not include notions such as fealty and valiance, such as devotion and service to lord, lady or cause. They would appear to be truly classical in inspiration and not ecclesiastical or romantic. Duby, as we have seen, insists on the crucial role played by the Church in the idealization of knighthood as chivalry, while others have sought to demonstrate the influence on that process of the romances of chivalry.[20] But in Italy, at least within the confines of the querelle, it is only in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and especially in Mora's Cavaliere with its insistence on the specific nature of the laws which govern the life of a knight, that we encounter anything resembling this ideal of allegiance to Lord, Church, Self and possibly Lady (the fourfold allegiance which rends Orlando's personality in the Furioso). Prior to that however the knight's energies are seen to be channelled exclusively to the protection of the commonweal, the classical res publica. The oath which the new knight is made to take, according to Accursius, is "quod mortem reipublicae causa non evitabit." The raison d'être of knights, according to Homodeis, is to defend the state: "finis militiae est quod provinciae vindi⁄centur" (see above p.36). In other words the body of knights was expected to be some kind of militia cum police-force, and this is most clearly enunciated by Beccadelli in his long eulogy of knights and chivalry (see above pp.21-2). In carrying out their duties, the knights were supposed moreover to be fearless and brave, but this typical quality of theirs is not the prowess of the preux chevalier. It is fortitude, one of the four classical moral virtues. More important still, although by defending the commonweal the knight could be said to have been serving it, the idea of service as such

is never emphasized in the course of the querelle and nowhere is it suggested that the word miles in itself implies service, that militare means to serve. Duby, as we have seen, claims that that was the primary signification of the word, which thus qualified it as a substitute for vassus, and that it was a meaning which it had borne since late Imperial times. Our authors, in their search for the etymology of the word miles, and therefore for its significance and the significance of knighthood in general, also turned to late Imperial sources (the Digest), but the definitions which they uncovered do not in the least connote the idea of service: "miles autem appellatur vel a militia, id est duritia, quam pro nobis sustinent, aut a multitudine, aut a malo, quod arcere milites solent, aut a numero mille hominum" (see above p.36). Roman lawyers in short expected knights to be men-of-arms who were prepared to fight for their country. But even to those who satisfied these requirements, the lawyers refused to concede that knighthood was a dignitas and they only granted precedence to them "in actibus militaribus" and sometimes "in actibus neutralibus". Since most contemporary knights however were no more than disguised merchants, the only privilege which they could legally claim was to wear their golden spurs.

To the fake knighthoods and specious nobility of dubbed tradesmen, doctors opposed the intrinsic and quintessential nobility of their own calling. They had not purchased and donned their title in an instant, but earned it through hard and dedicated labour. It corresponded to an inner reality, and whereas to knight meant in fact to create something which had not previously existed, to confer a doctorate was simply to confirm what was already there. This is the message which all our authors seek to put across and which the ceremony of conferment, as described by Homodeis (see above pp. 26-7), was supposed to convey. The book which was handed over

to the graduand, the diadem which was placed on his head and the ring which was passed on to his finger, did not endow him with knowledge of the Law but rewarded him for it, did not give him the qualities of a doctor but merely confirmed that he possessed them. But if we know, thanks to Homodeis, how one became a doctor, we do not know who could do so and what the requirements for eligibility to doctorhood were. We do not know in other words what a doctor really was. The texts we have studied throw little or no light on the matter, for almost all of them take doctorhood for granted. Biondo is the only author not to do so, and he claims that in his day any lawyer called himself a doctor, though there were many who abused the title. Bolognini's distinction, following Tartagni, between doctores and doctorellos who he had rather were called dolores (see above p.50) would tend to confirm this assertion; and so would Beccadelli's saying that a real doctor is one who "professa in scrana" (see above p.23), which suggests that not all doctors were genuine. Mora too, several decades later, maintains that many doctors were impostors, since doctorates were being "concessi a molti bufali" (see above p.253). It would seem therefore that there was as much abuse and as little dignitas on the one side as there was on the other in the querelle, though the knights appear the greater culprits, no doubt because it was not they who wielded the pen. Presumably a doctor must have had some form of legal training, but how rigorous this is likely to have been is another moot point. Biondo draws our attention to the many doctors "qui, cum paucas aut nullas sciant litteras, ipsum inquinant doctoratum" (see above p.72), and from this it is easy to conjecture that it was possible for any "quack" to pose as a doctor. But if it was so easy in those days to become a doctor, there must have been a time when the title was a more restricted privilege and had greater substance, since Roman lawyers held it in such high regard. It is impossible to say however under what circumstances and when doctorhood may have become

accessible to all. Assuming a change of that nature did indeed take place, one should like to know of course what a doctor had originally been and what later on there was to distinguish a real doctor from the crowd of doctorelli. Here again the clues are few and far between. Homodeis says that the aim of doctors was to preserve states ("finis doctorum est quod provinciae conserventur" - see above p.36), which is uninformative. Tartagni makes the distinction between "doctores existentes ad latus principis" and "doctores qui non sunt ad latus principis" (see above p.50), which may indicate that some were involved in the functions of govern/ment whereas others were not, but is still not very informative. According to Fitting, a doctor was initially a teacher of law, but in due course a doctorate ceased to be a job description and instead became an honorific distinction (see above p.28). Fitting however does not substantiate his claims, nor does he give any indication as to when the transformation might have taken place. Biondo for his part believed that the title of doctor was introduced as a substitute for judex towards the end of the fourteenth century (see above p.70). The title, as we know, had been in use long before that, but Biondo is not alone in associating the roles of doctor and judge. For Beccadelli a real doctor was one who " professa in scrana", which as we have seen (above p.23), may have been a judge, although it could equally have been a professor. And as evidence against the idenfification of doctor and judge, we have the Florentine sumptuary law quoted above (p.272), whose provisions make a clear distinction between the one and the other. The case is therefore still wide open; and it leaves many other questions unanswered too. Did for instance the ceremony of conferment as described by Homodeis continue to be performed even after the doctorate had ceased to be a restricted privilege? What was the nature and function of Colleges of Doctors, such as the Alessandria College which petitioned Francesco Sforza in 1463 (see above p.274), and when did they come into

existence? Above all, who had the right to confer doctorates? The colleges, or universities, or both? And any particular individuals, such as the local ruler? Finally, were there any differences from town to town, or state to state?

If we ever succeed in answering all these questions and in discovering the professional identity of doctors, we may still have to investigate their social identity and origins, before we are in a position to gauge the true significance of the querelle and the conflicts which lay behind it. This may turn out to be an even more delicate task, for we may come across cases like Taddeo de' Pepoli, the organiser of the public disputation in Bologna on the subject of precedence. The Pepoli were a leading Bolognese family and had been so for long enough to be considered "noble", but they had made their fortune in trade and banking. Taddeo himself had studied law and become a doctor, and this had been the excuse for great public festivites in Bologna. He knew also how to wield the sword and to use it effectively in defence of his and his family's interests, and he had also been knighted.[21] Was he therefore a doctor or a knight, a bourgeois or a nobleman? We might also find somebody like Lapo da Castiglionchio the younger. He was not a doctor of law, it is true, although his grandfather had been one, but he was a student of letters, who made of letters his profession. At the same time he came from a family which was of old feudal stock (albeit dispossessed). Is he therefore to be seen as the representative of a rising or a declining class, as the mouthpiece of new or old political interests? Hopefully not every case will be as complicated, but each case will need to be examined carefully. That much at least we can say regarding the significance of the querelle of Knights and Doctors, that it was a strictly urban phenomenon; and if our hypothesis proves to be correct that most of the knights involved were not real knights but disguised merchants, and that

the contestants on both sides therefore were drawn mainly from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, then the querelle would represent not a real conflict of classes, but more a clash of professional interests.

If the evidence from the querelle of Knights and Doctors is confusing, it becomes even more so when knights and doctors give way to arms and letters, and especially in the latter part of the sixteenth century. By then, as has already been pointed out (above p.229), the lexical register used to describe the contending parties has become quite extensive and indiscriminate. Cavaliere and dottore may still be amongst the most frequently recurring terms, but they have become synonymous with the even more common and unfathomable soldato and letterato. There are signs moreover that the doctors referred to are no longer just doctors of law and indications that the word cavaliere is often applied metaphorically. For Mora, in whose hands the querelle acquires most vivacity during this period, any soldato, regardless of his rank and social origins and of whether he fights on foot or on horseback, is a cavaliere: and he is so not by virtue of having been dubbed or of wearing golden spurs or of satisfying any other condition (such as the six conditions of Accursius), but simply because he bears arms and fights. Mora also has a more chivalric than legalistic conception of knighthood. What makes a cavaliere different, apart from his profession, is his sense of honour, his obedience to none but his lord and his allegiance to the Church, like the Orlando to whose school Mora claims to belong (see above p.262). Unlike Orlando however and contrary to the more romantic notions of chivalry which we find in other works of that period, Mora and his cavaliere will have little to do with ladies and are hard put at times to conceal their misogynism. For a start, "leterati ... non dicono che parole, che sono femine" (p.31) - Mora no doubt preferred not to remember the gender of armi - and he strongly objects to

the involvement of ladies, as we witness it in other texts of the genre like Romei's Discorsi, in discussions on matters of cavaleria : "alcune ... vogliono fare le dotte e le leterate con introdursi sovente nei convivij fra nobili, con ogni alterezza disputando del mestiere di Cavaleria e parlandone con tanto ardire, come se in imprese bellicose spesse volte si fossero trovate" (p.126). But for all his rejection of social refinements, and in particular of learned discourse, one wonders how genuine Mora's anti-literary stance is and how much of his Cavaliere's make-up is owed to personal experience on and off the battlefield, as Mora claims it is, and how much is in fact the product of literary convention, especially insofar as the ideological aspect of knighthood is concerned. As the author of the Tre quesiti for instance, and in spite here again of an avowedly experiential approach and anti-bookish pose, Mora shows himself to be quite familiar with other works written on the subject. This is a problem however which does not concern Mora alone but all the works of the later Cinquecento, of what we might call the "post-Brucioli" phase of the querelle. How much of what was written at the time was born of literary precedent and how much is the reflection of a social reality? One's main impression, reading the texts, is that the querelle was primarily a literary phenomenon, with each new work imitating and composing variations on a well-known theme. Nevertheless almost every work contains allusions to contemporary events and circumstances, and although this in itself could be no more than a literary convention, we do at least have one important piece of evidence (the submission by the Magistrato Supremo to Cosimo I) to prove that disputes about precedence were still taking place in the second half of the sixteenth century. This means that all the questions which we were asking about the significance of the querelle during its initial stage, need to be asked again. How frequently and where did disputes about precedence arise? How were they resolved and what were the identity

and social origins of the contestants? In this case too one could start by focusing one's attention on a particular city, and there is an intriguing lead to follow in Romei's Discorsi. As will be remembered, the discussion about arms and letters in the Discorsi was triggered off by the seating arrangement of the courtiers at the dinner table, "dall'una banda i Togati e le Dame, e all'incontro i Cavaglieri e huomini di cappa" (see above p.236). It would be interesting to know whether it was customary for the courtiers at Ferrara to be seated in this way, or whether this was simply poetic licence on Romei's behalf. If it was the custom, what social reality did it reflect? Did it conceal some form of class rivalry, or was it just a courtly nicety? Romei's actual dialogue exudes an air of camaraderie, as do most of the texts of that period, which therefore leave an impression of perfect harmony. Reading between the lines however one gets the feeling that the sailing was not always as smooth as the authors would have liked it to be, and that beneath the surface of literary appearances tension was always simmering, a tension which came to a head in Mora's Cavaliere. One of Mora's main grudges against letterati was the spurious claims they made and the undeserved attention they demanded and received from men of authority and dispensers of patronage, i.e. from princes. If there was antagonism behind the façade of the querelle, this is probably what it was: parasitic courtiers presenting their credentials for recognition and protection from their prince. In this connection it is interesting to note that arms and letters were also a popular theme amongst emblematists during the latter part of the sixteenth century and that in recent years an interpretation has been given of its popularity which also seeks to present it as an expression of the competitiveness of the courtly environment:

> as the principal authors were dependent for their livelihood upon wealthy patrons and the court, they were obliged, or felt themselves obliged, to demonstrate their social and political utility. Furthermore, they were eager for glory and kudos. Theirs was an actual, practical desire as well as a doctrinary Pindaric or Horatian persuasion.

Aside from the sycophants at court, their most active competitors for glory and recognition were the busy fighters and condottieri of the time. Realization of this fact set them to reflecting and theorizing about the relative values of the two vocations. 22

Emblems, because of their epigrammatic nature, offer even less clues about their social background than do our various texts, and this interpretation of them is conjectural, or at least unsubstantiated by its author, but it is nevertheless interesting in view of the emphasis it lays on the motivating role of the court. It would seem that it was the court which also gave the querelle of Arms and Letters its specific character. It dictated both the choice of setting - most texts are either set in or around some court - and the subject matter - arms and letters, on Castiglione's evidence, being of particular concern to courtiers -, but it is the mode of presentation which it influenced above all, with its mixture of civility, conformity and flattery. It presents what is most likely an idealized portrait of a society in which everyone tries to please, is careful not to cause offence, and therefore only expresses acceptable and accepted ideas (i.e. ideas sanctioned by literary precedent). What is more, the very idealization of the portrait was probably a means of indoctrinating the readers into believing that that was the type of world in which they lived, and it was most certainly a way of assuring one's prince (encomium, it must be remembered, became an integral part of the genre) that all was well in his best of worlds. It is in this respect that the works of the mature stages of the querelle are conspicuously different from those of the early phase. During the early phase it was <u>what</u> was said which mattered; later on it was <u>how</u> it was said which came to matter.

Whether courtly or urban, of knights and doctors, or of arms and letters, the querelle was first and last a literary phenomemom from the north of Italy. In between however there was that brief interlude from the Neapolitan south, with Galateo and Acquaviva, Nifo

and Prassicio. This was by far the genre's liveliest phase, and it is therefore the most tempting one to submit to further inquiry. One's initial impression, despite the small nember of texts, is of a debate which involved the whole kingdom. According to Acquaviva (see above p.158) no subject was discussed more eagerly and defended more passionately by the aristocracy than their military vocation. Just how eager and passionate they were, thereby inciting those who took the other side to retort with equal fervour, can be seen from Galateo's writings. This induced Andrea Carafa, Count of Santa Severina and one-time Lieutenant-General of the Realm, to commission Nifo to write a report on the subject which would bring peace to the contending parties. But Nifo was unsuccessful and the polemic went on. The confrontation was no trifling matter, for it brought to grips two classes of society, each with its own way of life and of evaluating life: on the one hand the magnates, the proceres whom Galateo accuses of embezzled nobility, who were the feudal and military aristocracy of the kingdom, to which families like the Acquaviva belonged, and who had learnt to live by and for the sword, and on the other hand individuals of more humble extraction, like Galateo and Nifo, who believed in the nobility of learning and in an aristocracy of merit and who tried to live from the fruits of their pen. Whether and to what extent they constituted an actual noblesse de robe, socially and legally distinguished from the noblesse d'épée, and whether the querelle is therefore the articulation of a conflict of two noblesses competing for power, remains to be investigated, but that is certainly how the contestants themselves present the issue. Galateo boasts of his "avus ... et proavus et ceteri progenitores" who were "sanctissimi sacerdotes graeci ... , philosophiae et sacrarum scripturarum scientissimi" (see above p.144). In reply Belisario Acquaviva rallies to the defence of his own caste: "ne tamen a nostra nostrorumque professione aberrare videamur ... arma litteris preponenda esse

censemus" (see above p.151). The urgency and reality of the debate can not only be gauged from the passion with which it is argued (only Nifo shows more restraint, but he was the only author not to write spontaneously on the subject, and even he can become quite involved at times); it is also visible in the authors' attitude to their literary sources. Their starting point is always literary authority, but it is never long before they confront it with the teachings of experience: and it is usually experience which suffers least from the comparison. Galateo begins by faithfully adhering to the words of Aristotle, but concludes in a violent outburst of iconoclasm, which is a result of what he has learnt from life. Acquaviva too is acutely aware of the gap which exists between life and literature. He too begins with a slavish rendering of what he has learnt from books, but he too concludes by claiming that there is no better guide to life than life itself. And it is real life, their lives, which these people are talking about and is always uppermost in their minds. Galateo's concern "non de terminis sed de tota possessione" (see above p.132) is not just a philosophical stance; it is motivated by his desire to come to grips with the problem. Existential questions could not be resolved grammatically or etymologically. Even Prassicio, in his eminently academic approach, is concerned unlike few others that the discussion should not turn into a sterile play on words but that it should reflect the truth. His approach to us may seem strangely "unrealistic", proceeding as it does from God through the intelligences down to man. But for Prassicio that was the only way of understanding life and therefore of knowing how to lead one's life. It would definitely seem therefore as though in southern Italy the querelle was more the product of a particular social context than it was of literary tradition, that the support of literature was merely enlisted to give voice to a specific social problem, whereas in the north, despite the reality which undoubtedly lay behind the

texts, one often has the impression that the genre, especially with the progressing of time, was rather the product of itself. But since the social context of the querelle, both north and south, remains largely unexplored territory, this impression is bound to be no more than an impression until such time as more detailed research has been carried out.

If the social context of the querelle is largely unexplored territory, its literary context (i.e. the literary trends to which it was attached) is on the whole better known, though not necessarily better charted. One topic with which the querelle has many points of contact and which enjoyed great popularity during the Renaissance is the educational debate on the desirability of combining arms and letters. It is important to realize however that the querelle and this debate, even though they may have a great deal in common, are two quite different things. In this study we have attempted to acquaint the reader with the particular mannerisms and vocabulary of the querelle, so that he would be in a position to recognize it and distinguish it from other pronouncements on the subject of arms and letters made during the Renaissance, such precisely as the debate on the uniting of arms and letters. It is true that our knowledge of this debate is patchy and vague. We know about classical ideals of education and, up to a certain point, about their reception in the Renaissance, we know of Vittorino da Feltre and other Renaissance educationalists, and we are of course familiar with Castiglione's ideal courtier who is to possess arms and letters concatenate . But we have little information on the actual development the debate underwent during the Renaissance, and the generalizations which were being made about it some fifty years ago, are still being uttered today.[23] Nevertheless our information is sufficient for us to appreciate how different it is from the querelle. Whereas the querelle contrasts two "classes"

of men, two "professional" groups (men-of-arms and men-of-letters), the educational debate seeks to bring about a harmonization of man's major potentialities, his mind (typified by letters) and his body (typified by arms). The querelle and the debate therefore tend in opposite directions, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the Cortegiano (see above p.225), where it is precisely because it opposes arms to letters instead of uniting them that the querelle is dismissed so abruptly by the speakers. Yet many of the texts of the querelle, as we have seen, also advocate the alliance of arms and letters. It is Galateo who does so most forcefully, but Castiglionchio had also done it, even if less convincingly, and so did Nifo, albeit surreptitiously, and almost every author of the later Cinquecento portrayed arms and letters as bosom companions and many actually advocated the expediency of their union. But they always did so as a kind of afterthought, for it is the antithesis of arms and letters which in every case was the starting-point of the querelle. The querelle may have been used as a medium for the educational debate or as a way of contributing to it, but it always retained its individuality and always remained recognizably within the tradition of the genre to which it belonged. Not every utterance therefore about arms and letters in the Renaissance - and there are myriads - is of the same nature, and one must learn to discriminate. One of the more memorable episodes in the literature of the time concerning arms and letters is Agricane's outburst in the Orlando innamorato:

> e cosí spesi la mia fanciulezza
> in caccie, in giochi di arme e in cavalcare;
> né mi par che convenga a gentilezza
> star tutto il giorno ne' libri a pensare;
> ma la forza del corpo e la destrezza
> conviense al cavaliere esercitare.
> Dottrina al prete ed al dottor sta bene:
> io tanto saccio quanto mi conviene (I,xviii,43).

It has been suggested that this episode has similarities with the controversy between Bembo and Canossa over the superiority of arms and letters in the Cortegiano, and

by implication therefore that it belongs to the tradition of the querelle.[24] It does, it is true, talk of *cavaliere* and *dottor*, it does oppose arms ("arme") to letters ("libri", "dottrina"), and it does, by identifying *gentilezza* with *cavaliere* - a point which is re-emphasized in Orlando's reply ("io tiro teco a un segno, / che l'arme son de l'omo il primo onore") -, appear to be arguing the kind of question with which the querelle deals. But the case which Agricane is really making is that it is not necessary for a gentleman to be learned, that arms and letters in other words need not be united, and it would be more correct therefore to see this episode as a contribution to the educational debate than to the querelle as such. It would be absurd of course to want to draw too rigid a line between the two, since they obviously had much in common (as this very episode demonstrates) and since they are also quite likely to have influenced each other, though how much, we will not know until we are better informed on the actual debate. The discussion as to whether letters befitted a gentleman or whether he only needed to know how to fight, must have given considerable momentum to the querelle, but there may also have been an influence at work in the opposite direction. It is usually held that the educational debate about arms and letters gained its original impetus from newly rediscovered classical ideals and models of education, and this is no doubt true.[25] But we are bound to wonder how much the way was paved for the acceptance of the idea that arms and letters had need of one another by generation upon generation of Roman lawyers repeating: "imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis decoratam, sed etiam legibus oportet esse armatam" and "summa rei publicae tuitio de stirpe duarum rerum, armorum atque legum veniens vimque suam exinde muniens felix Romanorum genus omnibus anteponi nationibus omnibusque dominari tam praeteritis effecit temporibus quam deo propitio in aeternum efficiet" (see above p.27)?

That lawyers may have played an important part in fostering new modes of thought in the Renaissance is a fact which is widely recognized, but the extent to which the ideological contents of the corpus of Roman law may actually have inspired new beliefs and intellectual trends is not a point which has received much, if any attention, and understandably so, given the likely dimensions of such an undertaking.[26] But it is an area which, if investigated, promises to be rewarding.

In the Cortegiano, no sooner is the suggestion made that a courtier should master both arms and letters than it raises questions of national differences, not to say antagonisms. "Oltre alla bontà - says Ludovico da Canossa - il vero e principal ornamento dell'animo in ciascuno penso io che siano le lettere, benché i Franzesi solamente conoscano la nobilità delle arme e tutto il resto nulla estimino; di modo che non solamente non apprezzano le lettere, ma le aborriscono, e tutti i litterati tengon per vilissimi omini; e pare lor dir gran villania a chi si sia, quando lo chiamano clero" (I, xlii). Unlike the French who have a visceral mistrust of letters, the Italians, it is said, feel an instinctive affinity towards them, and this is greatly to their credit, even though, as Canossa reluctantly has to admit, their prominence in the field of learning has been of little use to them on the battlefield. Canossa's opinion, with its mixture of scorn, envy and a sense of inferiority, is typical of what all the texts written in the wake of the French invasions have to say any time there is a mention of the necessity to combine arms and letters. We have seen for example with what passion Galateo vituperates the "Goths and Franks" (and those in Italy who might feel tempted to admire and imitate them) for their contempt of learning (see above p. 128), and how the same contempt causes indignation even to Nifo in his seeming aloofness. In works of the later Cinquecento too the letter-loving

Italians are presented as the heroes of the tale and the letter-hating foreigners (usually the French) as its villains. The only exceptions are Mora's Cavaliere, where the roles are reversed (would that the Italians despised learning, is what Mora feels), and Guazzo's Dialoghi piacevoli, in which lavish praises are showered on the French, and the lamented Francis I in particular, for their patronage of letters (the Dialoghi, it must be rembered, are dedicated to a peer of the French Realm, Lodovico Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers) and in which the Italians are not always presented in the most favourable of lights: "hoggidí nelle corti de' prencipi non si veggono né poeti, né oratori, né filosofi, né altri letterati, o se pur ve n'ha alcuno, gli conviene (per sua sciagura) recarsi a ventura il poter mangiar a tinello e riempir l'ultimo seggio della tavola" (p.178). An observation of this nature must make us pause and wonder how much truth there is behind the expressions of national pride and prejudice which crop up so regularly from work to work. Were the French and other foreigners really such Philistines? And how much better were the Italians? It is true that within the context of the querelle the first criticisms to be directed at specific nations instead of "barbarians" in general appear during the period of foreign invasions, and this must mean that there was more to them than mere literary convention, especially if one considers how vehement some of them were. But if it was natural for someone like Galateo to feel humiliated at having to look on helplessly while his country was being raped and plundered by foreigners, he may not, initially at least, have been in a position to judge the degree of their education, and the invasions may no more than have uncovered latent cultural prejudices within him, which he was now able to attach to a particular object, barbarian being substituted by French. In Lapo da Castiglionchio we also find many attacks upon the uncouthness and ignorance of barbarians, but since Lapo had no experience to speak of of foreign

peoples and since he was only too painfully aware of the Philistinism of his fellow nationals, his prejudice can only have been culturally motivated. It is of course the type of prejudice fostered by Petrarch against the "furor de lassù, gente ritrosa" and to which anyone imbued with ideals of Italian re-birth, such as Lapo was, was bound to respond and which he was bound to cultivate. Galateo was also possessed with such ideals, and considering how his admiration for ancient Greece made it hard enough for him to tolerate Romans, it is no wonder that he should have latched on to the opportunity afforded him by the foreign invasions of fulminating against barbarians of flesh and blood. His xenophobia would seem therefore to have been inspired more by his education than by his own experience of life. He himself realized at times (even before the self-inflicted auto-da-fé of his old age, when he condemned the culture with which he had been imbued as totally mendacious and illusory), that there were in fact as many barbarians inside Italy as there were without. If even Galateo's judgement of his compatriots and enemies therefore was a cliché, how much more so is that of later authors likely to have been, when the whole genre had in any case become a series of common-places. The French view of Italy and the Italians during the Renaissance, and its evolution as a result of various stimuli, both literary (e.g. the translation and diffusion of the Cortegiano) and non-literary (e.g. the presence of numerous Italians in and around the royal court), has been the object of careful study by modern scholars.[27] Similar attention ought now be devoted to a study of the Italian view of France and the French; and it would be intriguing to know to what extent this view was fashioned not only by a cultural parti pris and by the presence of Frenchmen on Italian soil, but also in reaction to the opinions which were circulating in France, where it was the French who were obviously the heroes and the Italians the villains.

Other literary topics which were common at the time in Italy, and which are also part of the fabric of the querelle, are the debates on nobility and on the active and contemplative lives.[28] They are however but components of the genre, and must not be seen as identical with it. It is only Galateo and Prassicio who view the conflict between arms and letters as one between action and contemplation, though even Galateo does not do so consistently. When he attempts to bring about a reconciliation between arms and letters, which is his main purpose, he does not consider them so much as an expression of two types of life, but as the two elements which make up the full potential of man's personality, his "moral" and his "intellectual" capabilities. There is a certain extent to which a contrast between action and contemplation is also the main objective of Lapo da Castiglionchio's Comparatio, but the antithesis between the two, as we have seen, is more apparent than real. Contemplation to Lapo is not upward-looking and is not an end unto itself, but it is a kind of power store from which energies are released to inspire and stimulate the life of action; and letters thus tend to signify both action and contemplation, i.e. life, whereas arms become the agents of evil and destruction. Nifo for his part discounts contemplation altogether, considering all life to be action, and in the Comentariolus the arms-letters polarity represents the opposition between action and inaction. In the later Cinquecento action and contemplation are sometimes identified with arms and letters, but their comparison is just one of many arguments (often coupled with the mind-body argument) and is of no more significance than any other argument. During the early stages of the querelle, when the subject had been not arms and letters but knights and doctors, there had been no mention at all of action and contemplation, for the problem was entirely of this world. The question of nobility on the other hand is an inextricable feature of this early stage of the querelle,

where it is precisely in virtue of one's nobility that one is entitled to precedence: a doctorate is a dignitas, and a doctor is therefore noble and entitled to precedence. Nobilis however simply means better, and knighthood and doctorhood are considered strictly as individual, not as collective entitlements. The discussion therefore is not of birth against merit. It is about greater or lesser personal merit. It could also, if one accepts that the knights who are the doctors' butt in the querelle are mostly dubbed nouveaux riches, be said to be a contribution to the Aristotelian debate on whether or not riches are a legitimate factor of nobility. However, riches are never directly referred to, and certainly no distinction is ever made between newly acquired riches and riches of older stock. There is little therefore by which to connect the querelle with the type of discussion about nobility to which Dante contributed in the Convivio and with which Dante's friend Cino da Pistoia may well have attempted to link it, when he remarked, exceptionally, that "qui meruit sua virtute nobilitatem habere, magis dicitur nobilis, quam ille, qui descendit ex nobili genere" (see above p.29). The only one of all our authors to argue in terms of inherited versus personal nobility is Galateo, who identifies arms with the former and letters with the latter and for whom the querelle becomes a means of upholding the rights of legitimate claimants to titles of nobility (men of learning and virtue) against the usurpations of fraudulent pretenders (men of arms and ignorance). The only author explicitly to equate nobility with riches and lineage is Mora, for whom they are the very ingredients of nobility, and for whom not even arms, let alone letters, can confer nobility. Otherwise nobility is always used as a rough equivalent of excellence and the querelle of Arms and Letters is never therefore strictly speaking about nobility, certainly not during its later phase, when it is generally accepted that both arms and letters are "noble"

(i.e. excellent) and the only problem is to find out which is "more noble".

It has been suggested that the querelle of Arms and Letters might also be connected with a debate about a different kind of nobility. In 1947 Eugenio Garin edited Ilicino's querelle (in a savagely abridged version) together with Galateo's De dignitate disciplinarum (in a doctored version), both of which he published, with several texts on the Law versus Medicine querelle, under the title Disputa delle arti.[29] In his introduction, and to justify the title, Garin recalled an article by Oskar Kristeller, Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance, in which it is said that the inspiration behind the "battle of the arts" was the rivalry between various faculties and sciences at universities, which usually found its expression in the inaugural lecture delivered each year by every professor in praise of his own subject. In comparing their field of knowledge with that of their colleagues and rivals, and above all in seeking to prove its superiority, these professors, according to Kristeller and Garin, used criteria which were derived, via Averroes, from Aristotle, and according to which the nobility of a science was deducible either from its methodology or from the exaltedness of its subject: "il tema e l'impostazione della questione circa la nobiltà delle scienze, almeno come si profilò nel '400, seguiva puntualmente il primo commento d'Averroè al De anima, ove, appunto, si profilava una gerarchia delle discipline o secondo il metodo ... o secondo la dignità dell'oggetto."[30] To show how common this method of arguing was, Kristeller pointed to a remark by Pomponazzi in his Questions on the first book of Aristotle's De anima ("Nobilitas scientiae a quo sumatur. Quaestio est a quo sumatur magis nobilitas scientiae, an a nobilitate subiecti an a certitudine demonstrationis vel aequaliter ab ambobus "), and to Galileo's statement that the nobility of a science

depends on the certainty of its method rather than the dignity of its subject matter. [31] Kristeller also drew attention to the fact that comparisons of one "art" to another were equally the rule outside academic circles: Leonardo in his Paragone for instance advances claims for the superiority of painting over other arts. [32] To this one could add the arguments put forward by Ioan Cristoforo Romano in the Cortegiano for the superiority of sculpture over painting, to which Ludovico da Canossa replies: "parmi la pittura più nobile" (I,lii), because it imitates Nature more reliably, i.e. because its method is more certain. There is no doubt that this form of reasoning permeates the entire querelle of Arms and Letters, and for that matter the querelle of Knights and Doctors too. The superiority of arms and knights or of letters and doctors is often deduced from their object or from how they seek to achieve it. There are also a great many similarities between the actual arguments of the Arms and Letters querelle and those of the querelle of Law and Medicine. [33] It would be wrong however to want to assign the querelle of Arms and Letters too rigidly to the "battle of arts" tradition, for although many of its arguments are of academic inspiration and although it often presents warfare as a learned art, it cannot in any way be said to be an expression of the competition between rival university faculties. Even letters are used too vaguely or generally to correspond to any academic discipline in particular. When looked at from the point of view of this tradition in fact, the querelle seems quite incongruous, contrasting as it does two subjects which are not only non-academic in the strict sense of the word, but which are so different in nature the one from the other. The idea of opposing arms to letters can only therefore have come from somewhere else. At the same time it is important to take account of the many analogies between the querelle and the disputa delle arti, for they demonstrate that the querelle was no isolated phenomenon, but that it was very much in line

with current intellectual trends.

The most notable affinity between the querelle and the "battle of the arts" is that they were both ultimately of Aristotelian derivation. We have seen again and again how pervasive the influence of Aristotle was on the querelle, especially during its Arms and Letters phase. Almost every author of this phase acknowledges a debt and declares his allegiance to the Stagirite. Not one of them however, with the exception of Galateo, names Aristotle as the express ideator of the genre. Galateo for his part claims that it was a discussion on Aristotle's Ethics and the question "de dignitate virtutum" which lead to his writing "de dignitate disciplinarum" (see above p.135). Insofar as the querelle of Arms and Letters can be reduced to a comparison of moral and intellectual virtues (and that is indeed the matrix of most of the texts), then the Ethics, with its investigation of the value of these virtues and of the active and contemplative lives, can undoubtedly be considered as the single most influential classical work on the genre. It is by no means however the only work of Aristotle's which our authors quote. References to his other works are legion, and it would be a thesis in itself to record and chart Aristotle's overall influence. It would also require the knowledge of an expert to sort out what is genuinely Aristotelian from what is not, what was gained at first hand and what at second, third or more. Even an expert might not be sufficient to the task, since Renaissance Aristotelianism is mostly still an enigma (see above chap. IC, n.57). What matters however at this stage is not to discern genuine from less genuine. It is simply to state and take note of Aristotle's overwhelming presence in texts, many of which are not esoteric philosophical treatises but works of popular appeal. Aristotle and Aristotelianism have tended in the past to be regarded as untypical of the Renaissance and more characteristic of

the Middle Ages. This view is now being corrected and the ubiquitousness of Aristotle in the querelle brings us ever closer to that "stage where Renaissance Aristotelianism must be seen in a new light." [34]

No other ancient authority enjoyed quite the same prestige as did Aristotle amongst the authors of the querelle. Cicero was his closest rival, but his influence seems to have been more cosmetic than substantial. Whereas Aristotle provided food for thought, Cicero supplied nice quotations, the most popular of which was "cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae". Almost as popular was the equally pithy "parvi enim sunt foris arma, nisi est consilium domi", and the much longer: "quis enim est tam cupidus in perspicienda cognoscendaque rerum natura ut, si ei tractanti contemplantique res cognitione dignissimas, subito sit allatum periculum discrimenque patriae cui subvenire opitularique possit, non illa omnia relinquat atque abiciat, etiamsi dinumerare se stellas aut metiri mundi magnitudinem arbitretur?" All three of these quotations come from the first book of the De Officiis. [35] It was known that they did, and very often it was said so explicitly, but little attention was paid to the actual purport of Cicero's work, which investigates the relationship between the individual and society, between private and public needs, to conclude that man, who is a social animal, must and will naturally sacrifice his selfish aspirations to the demands of the community. This may be an argument one encounters in the querelle, but it never becomes a frame of reference for the genre as a whole in the same way as Aristotle's hierarchy of virtues does. Cicero, one feels from reading the querelle, was to that period what Marx is to ours: the authority quoted by all and misquoted by even more, but read by only a few and understood by fewer still. He was taken so much for granted that no one bothered to check him up. Had they done so, they might have struck upon the one work of his which was

truly pertinent to their subject: his oration Pro Murena in which, to defend his client, Cicero contends that it is to her military power and virtus that Rome owes her greatness, and that everyone must therefore give way to those who take up arms to defend her. This point at least was not lost on Flavio Biondo and Belisario Acquaviva, the only two authors to recall the Pro Murena, but even they did not cite what is arguably its most quotable quote and seems even more relevant to the querelle than the "cedant arma togae": "cedat ... forum castris, otium militiae, stilus gladio, umbra soli: sit denique in civitate ea prima res, propter quam ipsa est civitas omnium princeps" (xiv). It is all the more surprising that the Pro Murena was not better known, if one considers that Quintilian's much read and imitated Institutio oratoria puts it forward as a useful model for a rhetorical exercise on the theme "iuris periti an militaris viri laus maior".[36] This only goes to prove that Cicero served more to spice the debate than to fashion it. He may have been as omnipresent as Aristotle but his name was never pronounced with as much reverence as was the name of the "veramente maestro di coloro che sanno" (see above p.258). Besides Aristotle and Cicero, countless other writers from classical antiquity found their way into the texts of the querelle, though none quite so frequently. None of them moreover are the authors of works directly related to the genre, and there is no point therefore in giving their names, especially as it was in any case the rule rather then the exception during the Renaissance to list as many authorities as possible.

If one is to believe the word of E.R. Curtius, the origins of the genre could actually be traced beyond classical antiquity and beyond even the bounds of history. In his European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages Curtius claims that the arms-letters binomial is the expression of a polarity inherent in the notion of

sovereignty common to "the Indo-Iranians, the Celts, the Germanic and Italic peoples, ... the polarity of the magical, fruitful king and the wise, lawmaking king".[37] It is a polarity in terms of which, still according to Curtius, Livy for instance explains the history of Rome, and which is also reflected in the poetry of Virgil. After Virgil it became codified as sapientia and fortitudo, and declined "to the domain of topics" (p.174). Curtius then follows the topos through the Middle Ages, when it was incorporated into "laments for the dead and eulogies of rulers as well as short narrative poems and the epic" (p.175), until the Renaissance, which it "entered in didactic writing on courtly ideals" (p.178). As a first example of such writing Curtius gives Castiglione's Cortegiano. This would mean a rather delayed entry into the Renaissance, and altogether Curtius's contention is so sweeping as to be misleading and unhelpful. It could nevertheless account for the fact that arms and letters offered themselves so spontaneously at the time, and not to authors of the querelle alone, as joint terms of comparison,[38] and it is true that in the querelle arms are often identified with fortezza (albeit in connection with the other three moral virtues) and that letters are not infrequently equated with wisdom. The querelle was not however, certainly not at its inception, the lifeless topos to which Curtius's theory would reduce it, but it could, as we have seen, serve as the liveliest possible comment on real life. To be sure, it was a culturally determined mode of evaluating life, and as such may well have stretched as far back as Curtius would have it. The proposition is interesting, but unprovable.

If the sapientia-fortitudo topos was indeed as well engrafted upon the consciousness of Indo-European races as Curtius has suggested, it may also lie at the root of another literary debate which enjoyed a fair degree of popularity during the Middle Ages and

which has been linked causally with the querelle of Arms and Letters: the debate of Clerks and Knights. In the chapter entitled "Las armas y las letras" of his Pensiamento de Cervantes, A. Castro, referring to the famous version of the querelle of Arms and Letters in Don Quixote, wrote: "a veces nos parece percibir en aquel debate, a través del simétrico paralelismo de sus razones, un eco lejano de las polémicas entre el clérigo y el caballero" (pp.218-19). [39] A cursory glance at any of the texts of the debate of Clerks and Knights however will show how distant the echo indeed is. [40] Its arguments are of a totally different order. It compares knights with clerks as lovers, dwelling upon their character, their physical prowess and their manners. It is impossible therefore that it should have exercised an influence on the contents of either the querelle of Knights and Doctors or the querelle of Arms and Letters, even though it was well established at the time the querelle of Knights and Doctors was beginning to get off the ground. It was also a more specifically French phenomenon (and to a certain extent Spanish as well), and it might be more correct for that reason to see it as France's counterpart to the querelle, expressing a similar type of conflict but against a different sort of background. There were knights in both countries (some more, some less genuine), but whereas in Italy, where univer/sities were of a more secular character, they were opposed by doctors and letterati, in France, where the centres of learning were under the control of the clergy, they were opposed by "clerics". Clerico, clero, cherci [41] are definitely not words which were in common usage in Italy. They are never once mentioned in the context of the querelle, and when Ludovico da Canossa exceptionally uses clero in the Cortegiano, he stresses that it is a Gallicism: "i Franzesi solamente conoscano la nobilità delle arme e tutto il resto nulla estimino; ... e pare lor dir gran villania a chi si sia, quando lo chiamano clero" (I,xlii). Knights and Clerks and Knights and Doctors were therefore independent genres.

The only hint we have of them ever rubbing shoulders is in the plot of Flamminio Scala's Il pellegrino fido amante (see above p. 222), in which Flaminia would like to marry a letterato whilst her father would like to give her to a milite. The terminology is that of the Knight-Doctor/Arms-Letters querelle, but the idea is similar to the one behind the debate of Knights and Clerks: who would be a better husband (lover), a man of learning or a man of arms? Unfortunately Scala only provides us with the sketchiest of outlines for this comedy, and it is a matter of conjecture as to how the actors actually filled it out. The suggestion has been made (see above p.223) that, given the close links between Scala and Isabella Andreini, they could have used arguments from the querelle of Arms and Letters (which also comprised arguments from the querelle of Knights and Doctors). Whether they might also have used arguments from the Knight and Clerk debate and how much that debate was still, if it ever had been, alive in Italy, and whether it did influence the querelle in a way which it is not possible to ascertain at this stage, are yet further questions which must remain unanswered for the time being.

If we know that the debate of Clerks and Knights flourished during the second half of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth, and if we can conjecture therefore the kind of society in which it did flourish, we must recognize that the texts themselves give us no information whatsoever about their background. They are mostly anonymous, and all they portray are the personal attributes of individual knights and clerks and the feelings they arouse in the hearts and minds of ladies. In spite of this, the debate has been interpreted as having an eminently sociological and political significance at an important moment in the history of western Europe. The great médiéviste Le Goff for instance said of it in 1962:

au fond du fameux débat entre le Clerc et le Chevalier qui a inspiré tant de poèmes, il y a la rivalité de deux groupes sociaux en face de la femme. Les Goliards ne croient pas pouvoir mieux dire leur supériorité en face des féodaux qu'en vantant la faveur dont ils jouissent auprès des femmes. Elles nous préfèrent, le clerc fait mieux l'amour que le chevalier. Dans cette affirmation, le sociologue doit voir l'expression privilégiée d'une lutte de groupes sociaux. 42

Some years earlier Vittorio Russo had written:

si andava formando una vera e propria classe intellettuale con la coscienza di una cultura nuova, di sensi più liberali e laici, che si immetteva nella società medievale, apportando in essa l'ideale nuovo di una supremazia fondata sulla forza della cultura e della ragione, più che sulla forza delle armi e della fede. (...) I débats individuano il momento di affermazione della nuova 'chiericheria' contrapponendo all'ideale di prodezza della tradizione cavalleresca e feudale, l'ideale di supremazia culturale. 43

The confrontation between arms and letters during the Renaissance (what we have called the querelle) took place against a much more visible background than the débats had done, especially in the case of its two most famous instances, in the Cortegiano and in Don Quixote, and it is hardly surprising therefore that it too should have been the object of such momentous interpretations. Commenting on the querelle chapters of the Cortegiano, Giuseppe Toffanin wrote in 1961:

l'umanesimo italiano prepose, com'è noto, le lettere alle armi: fu la sua gloria e la sua debolezza in un mondo che la pensava molto diversamente. Ma qual'era il sentimento che muoveva gli italiani a questa rivendicazione ed esaltazione delle lettere? Vanità? Estetismo? No: era quella fede religiosa nella virtù rinnovatrice e conciliatrice della sapienza adoperata dai laici con animo sacerdotale, come se il regno di essa stesse ora per cominciare: quella fede che appare ormai concreta nel Petrarca. Non la forza, pensavano gli umanisti, muove il mondo; non con le armi conquistò Cesare il mondo, ma con il suo spirito, scriveva il Petrarca in versi e in prosa. E non intendeva fare della retorica. (...) Gli umanisti credono che nel retaggio della letteratura classica si celi una minore ma anch'essa necessaria Rivelazione. I popoli che, come i Francesi, preponevano le armi alla gloria, erano popoli ai quali il messaggio umanistico non era giunto. L'idea di una pace universale che l'universalizzarsi dell'umanesimo avrebbe portato qui s'adombra. 44

If there is any truth in what Toffanin says, it would tend to conflict with the opinion of Russo and Le Goff and

thereby to stir up once again the whole polemic of the Renaissance versus the Middle Ages. Not everyone though has taken the same view as Toffanin. Cian, as we know, dismissed those very chapters of the Cortegiano for trotting out "una delle tante questioni oziose ...che, a partire dall'antichità ... e durante il Rinascimento, furono trattate e agitate con un interesse e un ardore polemico, che noi oggi difficilmente riusciamo a spiegarci." [45] Cian was outbidden by G. Todaro, in Il tipo ideale del cortegiano nel Cinquecento, written in 1906. Todaro numbers the querelle amongst "questioni inutili e sciocche" and strongly berates Castiglione for bothering with such trifles: "cosí il Castiglione si lambicca il cervello, anch'egli, a trattare quella questione cosí oziosa e di nessuno interesse, sulla preferenza da darsi alle armi o alle lettere." [46] It was in reply to this contention that Amerigo Castro wrote in 1925 "no debe considerarse la polémica como ociosa en sí misma (pese a la frivolidad o inconsistencia de los argumentos que a veces se utilizaron), ni como un pleito que hayamos de fallar hoy en uno u otro sentido." [47] And Castro, whilst not going to the same lengths as Toffanin was to do, expressed the view that the question was to be seen as a "molde para las preocupaciones sociológicas del Renacimiento" (p.218). These critics had not identified the querelle as such, but they had intuited the fact of its existence, especially Cian and Castro. [48] However, by focusing their attention on its least typical manifestations, they tended to misunderstand it. As we ourselves have noted (see above p.207ff) the querelle in the Cortegiano appears somewhat out of place and is discussed rather lightheartedly by the speakers, which explains why it could be seen as "otiose". In Don Quixote on the other hand, even though it is presented with detached irony, it acquires more significance through the mere fact of its inclusion in a work which is a satire of the customs and beliefs of a time. That is why Castro reacted against Cian's

interpretation. As for Toffanin, he was probably the victim of a particular vision of reality developed during the Renaissance and kept alive even today amongst scholars in Italy, which pictures the Renaissance as an age of culture and light, and the Middle Ages as a period of barbarity and violence. To anyone imbued with such notions the Arms-Letters dichotomy presents itself as a convenient metaphor to express the antithesis between the two periods. But in accepting too readily that the two terms have a value-loaded significance, one runs the risk of using them, rather than as the object on which to direct one's looking-glass, as the looking-glass itself. This, it would seem, has been the mistake of several critics to date, and in particular of the author of a fairly recent thesis on the very subject of Arms and Letters during the Renaissance (in France).[49]

In this study we have tried to avoid that pitfall and to find out the ways in which the terms were actually used during the Renaissance. One way was to bring arms and letters together (this is the educational debate) and another was to pit them against one another: this is what we have called the querelle, and it is this on which we have concentrated our attention. It all began with knights and doctors competing for precedence way back in the twelfth century (if not before), and it was turned into a popular literary theme towards the end of the fifteenth century by Petrarch's commentator Ilicino, who substituted a legal terminology with a philosophical terminology. The genre reached the apex of its popularity in the second half of the sixteenth century. At times it displayed such liveliness that it was obviously acting as a vehicle for social and political considerations; at others it became so repetitive and conventional as to appear no more than a lifeless topos. All the while however, knights and doctors, <u>letterati</u> and <u>soldati</u> were continuing in the background, or so it would seem at least, to argue about

precedence. There are still many questions about the genre which remain unanswered - in particular concerning the degree to which it did reflect a social reality, and if it did, concerning the precise identity of the contestants - but at least, the very fact that we are able to articulate these questions, means that we have made some progress towards dispelling ignorance.